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POETICAL WORKS

OF

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

II

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

II

SONGS IN MANY KEYS
ETC.

Author's Edition

EDINBURGH
DAVID DOUGLAS, CASTLE STREET
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
SONGS IN MANY KEYS (1849-1861)—	
PROLOGUE,	1
AGNES,	3
THE PLOUGHMAN,	29
SPRING,	32
THE STUDY,	36
THE BELLS,	41
NON-RESISTANCE,	43
THE MORAL BULLY,	44
THE MIND'S DIET,	47
OUR LIMITATIONS,	49
THE OLD PLAYER,	50
A POEM,	56
TO GOVERNOR SWAIN,	63
TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND,	65
AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH,	66
AFTER A LECTURE ON MOORE,	70
AFTER A LECTURE ON KEATS,	72
AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY,	74
AT THE CLOSE OF A COURSE OF LECTURES,	76

PAGE

THE HUDSON, ... 79
THE NEW EDEN, ... 81
SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY, . 86
FAREWELL, ... 89
FOR THE MEETING OF THE BURNS CLUB, ... 91
ODE FOR WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, . 93
BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER, . 95
THE VOICELESS, ... 98
THE TWO STREAMS, ... 99
THE PROMISE, ... 100
AVIS, ... 102
THE LIVING TEMPLE, ... 105
AT A BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL, . . 107
A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE, . . . 108
THE GRAY CHIEF, ... 110
THE LAST LOOK, ... 111
IN MEMORY OF CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, JR., ... 113
MARTHA, ... 115
MEETING OF THE ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE, ... 116
THE PARTING SONG, ... 122
FOR THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SANITARY ASSOCIATION, . . 124
FOR THE BURNS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, ... 126
AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS, . . 129
BOSTON COMMON: THREE PICTURES, 133

PAGE

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA, . . . 135
INTERNATIONAL ODE, ... 138
VIVE LA FRANCE, ... 139
BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE, ... 141

POEMS OF THE CLASS OF '29 (1851-1889)—

BILL AND JOE, ... 145
A SONG OF "TWENTY-NINE," . . . 147
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, . . . 151
AN IMPROMPTU, ... 152
THE OLD MAN DREAMS, ... 154
REMEMBER—FORGET, ... 156
OUR INDIAN SUMMER, ... 158
MARE RUBRUM, ... 161
THE BOYS, ... 163
LINES, ... 167
A VOICE OF THE LOYAL NORTH, . 169
J. D. R., ... 171
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP "UNION," 172
"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE," 176
F. W. C., ... 180
THE LAST CHARGE, ... 182
OUR OLDEST FRIEND, ... 184
SHERMAN'S IN SAVANNAH, . . . 187
MY ANNUAL, ... 188
ALL HERE, ... 192
ONCE MORE, ... 195

PAGE

THE OLD CRUISER, ... 201
HYMN FOR THE CLASS-MEETING, . 205
EVEN SONG, ... 206
THE SMILING LISTENER, . . . 212
OUR SWEET SINGER, . . . 217
H. C. M. H. S. J. K. W., . . . 220
WHAT I HAVE COME FOR, . . . 222
OUR BANKER, ... 224
FOR CLASS MEETING, . . . 228
"AD AMICOS," 232
HOW NOT TO SETTLE IT, . . . 235
THE LAST SURVIVOR, . . . 243
THE ARCHBISHOP AND GIL BLAS, . 248
THE SHADOWS, ... 253
BENJAMIN PEIRCE, ... 256
IN THE TWILIGHT, ... 258
A LOVING-CUP SONG, . . . 263
THE GIRDLE OF FRIENDSHIP, . . 265
THE LYRE OF ANACREON, . . . 266
THE OLD TUNE, ... 268
THE BROKEN CIRCLE, . . . 269
THE ANGEL-THIEF, ... 272
AFTER THE CURFEW, . . . 273

NOTES, ... 276

SONGS IN MANY KEYS.

1849-1861.

PROLOGUE.

THE piping of our slender, peaceful reeds
Whispers uncared for while the trumpets bray;
Song is thin air; our hearts' exulting play
Beats time but to the tread of marching deeds,
Following the mighty van that Freedom leads,
Her glorious standard flaming to the day!
The crimsoned pavement where a hero bleeds
Breathes nobler lessons than the poet's lay.
Strong arms, broad breasts, brave hearts, are better worth
Than strains that sing the ravished echoes dumb.
Hark! 'tis the loud reverberating drum

Rolls o'er the prairied West, the rock-bound
North :
The myriad-handed Future stretches forth
Its shadowy palms. Behold, we come,—
we come !

Turn o'er these idle leaves. Such toys as
these
Were not unsought for, as, in languid
dreams,
We lay beside our lotus-feeding streams,
And nursed our fancies in forgetful ease.
It matters little if they pall or please,
Dropping untimely, while the sudden gleams
Glare from the mustering clouds whose
blackness seems
Too swollen to hold its lightning from the
trees.
Yet, in some lull of passion, when at last
These calm revolving moons that come and
go—
Turning our months to years, they creep so
slow—
Have brought us rest, the not unwelcome
past
May flutter to thee through these leaflets,
cast
On the wild winds that all around us blow.

May 1, 1861

AGNES.

The story of Sir Harry Frankland and Agnes Surriage is told in the ballad with a very strict adhesion to the facts. These were obtained from information afforded me by the Rev. Mr. Webster, of Hopkinton, in company with whom I visited the Frankland Mansion in that town, then standing; from a very interesting Memoir, by the Rev. Elias Nason, of Medford; and from the manuscript diary of Sir Harry, or more properly Sir Charles Henry Frankland, now in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

At the time of the visit referred to, old Julia was living, and on our return we called at the house where she resided.[1] Her account is little more than paraphrased in the poem. If the incidents are treated with a certain liberality at the close of the fifth part, the essential fact that Agnes rescued Sir Harry from the ruins after the earthquake, and their subsequent marriage as related, may be accepted as literal truth. So with regard to most of the trifling details which are given; they are taken from the record.

It is greatly to be regretted that the Frankland Mansion no longer exists. It was accidentally burned on the 23rd of January, 1858, a year or two after the first sketch of this ballad was written. A visit to it was like stepping out of the century into the years before the Revolution. A new house, similar in plan and arrangements to the old one, has been built upon its site, and the terraces, the clump of box, and the lilacs doubtless remain to bear witness to the truth of this story.

[1] She was living June 10, 1861, when this ballad was published.

The story, which I have told literally in rhyme, has been made the subject of a carefully studied and interesting romance by Mr. E. L. Bynner.

PART FIRST.

THE KNIGHT.

THE tale I tell is gospel true,
As all the bookmen know,
And pilgrims who have strayed to view
The wrecks still left to show.

The old, old story,—fair, and young,
And fond,—and not too wise,—
That matrons tell, with sharpened tongue,
To maids with downcast eyes.

Ah ! maidens err and matrons warn
Beneath the coldest sky ;
Love lurks amid the tasselled corn
As in the bearded rye !

But who would dream our sober sires
Had learned the old world's ways,
And warmed their hearths with lawless fires
In Shirley's homespun days ?

'Tis like some poet's pictured trance
His idle rhymes recite,—
This old New England-born romance
Of Agnes and the Knight ;

Yet, known to all the country round,
  Their home is standing still,
Between Wachusett's lonely mound
  And Shawmut's threefold hill.

One hour we rumble on the rail,
  One half-hour guide the rein,
We reach at last, o'er hill and dale,
  The village on the plain.

With blackening wall and mossy roof,
  With stained and warping floor,
A stately mansion stands aloof
  And bars its haughty door.

This lowlier portal may be tried,
  That breaks the gable wall;
And lo! with arches opening wide,
  Sir Harry Frankland's hall!

'Twas in the second George's day
  They sought the forest shade,
The knotted trunks they cleared away,
  The massive beams they laid,

They piled the rock-hewn chimney tall,
  They smoothed the terraced ground,
They reared the marble-pillared wall
  That fenced the mansion round.

Far stretched beyond the village bound
The Master's broad domain ;
With page and valet, horse and hound,
He kept a goodly train.

And, all the midland county through,
The ploughman stopped to gaze
Whene'er his chariot swept in view
Behind the shining bays,

With mute obeisance, grave and slow,
Repaid by nod polite,—
For such the way with high and low
Till after Concord fight.

Nor less to courtly circles known
That graced the three-hilled town
With far-off splendours of the Throne,
And glimmerings from the Crown ;

Wise Phipps, who held the seals of state
For Shirley over sea ;
Brave Knowles, whose press-gang moved of late
The King Street mob's decree ;

And judges grave, and colonels grand,
Fair dames and stately men,
The mighty people of the land,
The "World" of there and then.

'T was strange no Chloe's "beauteous Form,"
And "Eyes' cœlestial Blew,"
This Strephon of the West could warm,
No Nymph his Heart subdue!

Perchance he wooed as gallants use
Whom fleeting loves enchain,
But still unfettered, free to choose,
Would brook no bridle-rein.

He saw the fairest of the fair,
But smiled alike on all;
No band his roving foot might snare,
No ring his hand enthrall.

PART SECOND.

THE MAIDEN.

Why seeks the knight that rocky cape
Beyond the Bay of Lynn?
What chance his wayward course may shape
To reach its village inn?

No story tells; whate'er we guess,
The past lies deaf and still,
But Fate, who rules to blight or bless,
Can lead us where she will.

Make way ! Sir Harry's coach and four,
And liveried grooms that ride !
They cross the ferry, touch the shore
On Winnisimmet's side.

They hear the wash on Chelsea Beach,—
The level march they pass,
Where miles on miles the desert reach
Is rough with bitter grass.

The shining horses foam and pant,
And now the smells begin
Of fishy Swampscott, salt Nahant,
And leather-scented Lynn.

Next, on their left, the slender spires
And glittering vanes that crown
The home of Salem's frugal sires,
The old, witch-haunted town.

So onward, o'er the rugged way
That runs through rocks and sand,
Showered by the tempest-driven spray,
From bays on either hand,

That shut between their outstretched arms
The crews of Marblehead,
The lords of ocean's watery farms,
Who plough the waves for bread.

At last the ancient inn appears,
The spreading elm below,
Whose flapping sign these fifty years
Has see-sawed to and fro.

How fair the azure fields in sight
Before the low-browed inn!
The tumbling billows fringe with light
The crescent shore of Lynn;

Nahant thrusts outward through the waves
Her arm of yellow sand,
And breaks the roaring surge that braves
The gauntlet on her hand;

With eddying whirl the waters lock
Yon treeless mound forlorn,
The sharp-winged sea-fowl's breeding-rock,
That fronts the Spouting Horn;

Then free the white-sailed shallops glide,
And wide the ocean smiles,
Till, shoreward bent, his streams divide
The two bare Misery Isles.

The master's silent signal stays
The wearied cavalcade;
The coachman reins his smoking bays
Beneath the elm-tree's shade.

A gathering on the village green !
  The cocked-hats crowd to see,
On legs in ancient velveteen,
  With buckles at the knee.

A clustering round the tavern-door
  Of square-toed village boys,
Still wearing, as their grandsires wore,
  The old-world corduroys !

A scampering at the "Fountain" inn,—
  A rush of great and small,—
With hurrying servants' mingled din
  And screaming matron's call !

Poor Agnes ! with her work half done
  They caught her unaware ;
As, humbly, like a praying nun,
  She knelt upon the stair ;

Bent o'er the steps, with lowliest mien
  She knelt, but not to pray,—
Her little hands must keep them clean,
  And wash their stains away.

A foot, an ankle, bare and white,
  Her girlish shapes betrayed,—
"Ha ! Nymphs and Graces !" spoke the
    Knight ;
  "Look up, my beauteous Maid !"

She turned,—a reddening rose in bud,
  Its calyx half withdrawn,—
Her cheek on fire with damasked blood
  Of girlhood's glowing dawn!

He searched her features through and through,
  As royal lovers look
On lowly maidens, when they woo
  Without the ring and book.

"Come hither, Fair one! Here, my Sweet!
  Nay, prithee, look not down!
Take this to shoe those little feet,"—
  He tossed a silver crown.

A sudden paleness struck her brow,—
  A swifter blush succeeds;
It burns her cheek; it kindles now
  Beneath her golden beads.

She flitted, but the glittering eye
  Still sought the lovely face.
Who was she? What, and whence? and why
  Doomed to such menial place?

A skipper's daughter,—so they said,—
  Left orphan by the gale
That cost the fleet of Marblehead
  And Gloucester thirty sail.

Ah ! many a lonely home is found
  Along the Essex shore,
That cheered its goodman outward bound,
  And sees his face no more !

"Not so," the matron whispered,—"sure
  No orphan girl is she,—
The Surriage folk are deadly poor
  Since Edward left the sea,

"And Mary, with her growing brood,
  Has work enough to do
To find the children clothes and food
  With Thomas, John, and Hugh.

"This girl of Mary's, growing tall,—
  (Just turned her sixteenth year,)—
To earn her bread and help them all,
  Would work as housemaid here."

So Agnes, with her golden beads,
  And naught beside as dower,
Grew at the wayside with the weeds,
  Herself a garden-flower.

'Twas strange, 'twas sad,—so fresh, so fair !
  Thus Pity's voice began.
Such grace ! an angel's shape and air !
  The half-heard whisper ran.

For eyes could see in George's time,
As now in later days,
And lips could shape, in prose and rhyme,
The honeyed breath of praise.

No time to woo! The train must go
Long ere the sun is down,
To reach, before the night-winds blow,
The many-steepled town.

'Tis midnight,—street and square are still;
Dark roll the whispering waves
That lap the piers beneath the hill
Ridged thick with ancient graves.

Ah, gentle sleep! thy hand will smooth
The weary couch of pain,
When all thy poppies fail to soothe
The lover's throbbing brain!

'Tis morn,—the orange-mantled sun
Breaks through the fading gray,
And long and loud the Castle gun
Peals o'er the glistening bay.

"Thank God 'tis day!" With eager eye
He hails the morning shine:—
"If art can win, or gold can buy,
The maiden shall be mine!"

PART THIRD.

THE CONQUEST.

"Who saw this hussy when she came?
What is the wench, and who?"
They whisper. "*Agnes*—is her name?
Pray what has she to do?"

The housemaids parley at the gate,
The scullions on the stair,
And in the footmen's grave debate
The butler deigns to share.

Black Dinah, stolen when a child,
And sold on Boston pier,
Grown up in service, petted, spoiled,
Speaks in the coachman's ear:

"What, all this household at his will?
And all are yet too few?
More servants, and more servants still,—
This pert young madam too!"

"*Servant!* fine servant!" laughed aloud
The man of coach and steeds;
"She looks too fair, she steps too proud
This girl with golden beads!

"I tell you, you may fret and frown,
And call her what you choose,
You 'll find my Lady in her gown,
Your Mistress in her shoes !"

Ah, gentle maidens, free from blame,
God grant you never know
The little whisper, loud with shame,
That makes the world your foe !

Why tell the lordly flatterer's art,
That won the maiden's ear,—
The fluttering of the frightened heart,
The blush, the smile, the tear ?

Alas ! it were the saddening tale
That every language knows,—
The wooing wind, the yielding sail,
The sunbeam and the rose.

And now the gown of sober stuff
Has changed to fair brocade,
With broidered hem, and hanging cuff,
And flower of silken braid ;

And clasped around her blanching wrist
A jewelled bracelet shines,
Her flowing tresses' massive twist
A glittering net confines ;

And mingling with their truant wave
A fretted chain is hung;
But ah! the gift her mother gave,—
Its beads are all unstrung!

Her place is at the master's board,
Where none disputes her claim;
She walks beside the mansion's lord,
His bride in all but name.

The busy tongues have ceased to talk,
Or speak in softened tone,
So gracious in her daily walk
The angel light has shown.

No want that kindness may relieve
Assails her heart in vain
The lifting of a ragged sleeve
Will check her palfrey's rein.

A thoughtful calm, a quiet grace
In every movement shown,
Reveal her moulded for the place
She may not call her own.

And, save that on her youthful brow
There broods a shadowy care,
No matron sealed with holy vow
In all the land so fair!

PART FOURTH.

THE RESCUE.

A ship comes foaming up the bay,
  Along the pier she glides ;
Before her furrow melts away,
  A courier mounts and rides.

"Haste, Haste, post Haste!" the letters
    bear ;
  "Sir Harry Frankland, These."
Sad news to tell the loving pair !
  The knight must cross the seas.

"Alas ! we part !"—the lips that spoke
  Lost all their rosy red,
As when a crystal cup is broke,
  And all its wine is shed.

"Nay, droop not thus, — where'er," he
    cried,
  "I go by land or sea,
My love, my life, my joy, my pride,
  Thy place is still by me !"

Through town and city, far and wide,
  Their wandering feet have strayed,
From Alpine lake to ocean tide,
  And cold Sierra's shade.

At length they see the waters gleam
  Amid the fragrant bowers
Where Lisbon mirrors in the stream
  Her belt of ancient towers.

Red is the orange on its bough,
  To-morrow's sun shall fling
O'er Cintra's hazel-shaded brow
  The flush of April's wing.

The streets are loud with noisy mirth,
  They dance on every green;
The morning's dial marks the birth
  Of proud Braganza's queen.

At eve beneath their pictured dome
  The gilded courtiers throng;
The broad moidores have cheated Rome
  Of all her lords of song.

Ah! Lisbon dreams not of the day—
  Pleased with her painted scenes—
When all her towers shall slide away
  As now these canvas screens!

The spring has passed, the summer fled,
  And yet they linger still,
Though autumn's rustling leaves have spread
  The flank of Cintra's hill.

The town has learned their Saxon name,
And touched their English gold,
Nor tale of doubt nor hint of blame
From over sea is told.

Three hours the first November dawn
Has climbed with feeble ray
Through mists like heavy curtains drawn
Before the darkened day.

How still the muffled echoes sleep!
Hark! hark! a hollow sound,—
A noise like chariots rumbling deep
Beneath the solid ground.

The channel lifts, the water slides
And bares its bar of sand,
Anon a mountain billow strides
And crashes o'er the land.

The turrets lean, the steeples reel
Like masts on ocean's swell,
And clash a long discordant peal,
The death-doomed city's knell.

The pavement bursts, the earth upheaves
Beneath the staggering town!
The turrets crack—the castle cleaves—
The spires come rushing down.

Around, the lurid mountains glow
With strange unearthly gleams;
While black abysses gape below,
Then close in jagged seams.

The earth has folded like a wave,
And thrice a thousand score,
Clasped, shroudless, in their closing grave,
The sun shall see no more!

And all is over. Street and square
In ruined heaps are piled;
Ah! where is she, so frail, so fair,
Amid the tumult wild?

Unscathed, she treads the wreck-piled street,
Whose narrow gaps afford
A pathway for her bleeding feet,
To seek her absent lord.

A temple's broken walls arrest
Her wild and wandering eyes;
Beneath its shattered portal pressed,
Her lord unconscious lies.

The power that living hearts obey
Shall lifeless blocks withstand?
Love led her footsteps where he lay,—
Love nerves her woman's hand:

One cry,—the marble shaft she grasps,—
Up heaves the ponderous stone :—
He breathes,—her fainting form he clasps,—
Her life has bought his own !

PART FIFTH.

THE REWARD.

How like the starless night of death
Our being's brief eclipse,
When faltering heart and failing breath
Have bleached the fading lips !

She lives ! What guerdon shall repay
His debt of ransomed life ?
One word can charm all wrongs away,—
The sacred name of WIFE !

The love that won her girlish charms
Must shield her matron fame,
And write beneath the Frankland arms
The village beauty's name.

Go, call the priest ! no vain delay
Shall dim the sacred ring !
Who knows what change the passing day,
The fleeting hour, may bring ?

Before the holy altar bent,
  There kneels a goodly pair;
A stately man, of high descent,
  A woman, passing fair.

No jewels lend the blinding sheen
  That meaner beauty needs,
But on her bosom heaves unseen
  A string of golden beads.

The vow is spoke,—the prayer is said,—
  And with a gentle pride
The Lady Agnes lifts her head,
  Sir Harry Frankland's bride.

No more her faithful heart shall bear
  Those griefs so meekly borne,—
The passing sneer, the freezing stare,
  The icy look of scorn;

No more the blue-eyed English dames
  Their haughty lips shall curl,
Whene'er a hissing whisper names
  The poor New England girl.

But stay!—his mother's haughty brow,—
  The pride of ancient race,—
Will plighted faith, and holy vow,
  Win back her fond embrace?

Too well she knew the saddening tale
  Of love no vow had blest,
That turned his blushing honours pale,
  And stained his knightly crest.

They seek his Northern home,—alas:
  He goes alone before;—
His own dear Agnes may not pass
  The proud, ancestral door.

He stood before the stately dame;
  He spoke; she calmly heard,
But not to pity, nor to blame;
  She breathed no single word.

He told his love,—her faith betrayed;
  She heard with tearless eyes;
Could she forgive the erring maid?
  She stared in cold surprise.

How fond her heart, he told,—how true;
  The haughty eyelids fell;—
The kindly deeds she loved to do;
  She murmured, "It is well."

But when he told that fearful day,
  And how her feet were led
To where entombed in life he lay,
  The breathing with the dead,

And how she bruised her tender breasts
  Against the crushing stone,
That still the strong-armed clown protests
  No man can lift alone.

Oh ! then the frozen spring was broke ;
  By turns she wept and smiled ;—
"Sweet Agnes !" so the mother spoke,
  "God bless my angel child !

"She saved thee from the jaws of death ;
  'Tis thine to right her wrongs ;
I tell thee,—I, who gave thee breath,—
  To her thy life belongs ! "

Thus Agnes won her noble name,
  Her lawless lover's hand ;
The lowly maiden so became
  A lady in the land !

PART SIXTH.

CONCLUSION.

The tale is done ; it little needs
  To track their after ways,
And string again the golden beads
  Of love's uncounted days.

They leave the fair ancestral isle
For bleak New England's shore;
How gracious is the courtly smile
Of all who frowned before!

Again through Lisbon's orange bowers
They watch the river's gleam,
And shudder as her shadowy towers
Shake in the trembling stream.

Fate parts at length the fondest pair;
His cheek, alas! grows pale;
The breast that trampling death could spare
His noiseless shafts assail.

He longs to change the heaven of blue
For England's clouded sky,
To breathe the air his boyhood knew;
He seeks them but to die.

Hard by the terraced hillside town,
Where healing streamlets run,
Still sparkling with their old renown,—
The "Waters of the Sun,"—

The Lady Agnes raised the stone
That marks his honoured grave,
And there Sir Harry sleeps alone
By Wiltshire Avon's wave.

The home of early love was dear;
  She sought its peaceful shade,
And kept her state for many a year,
  With none to make afraid.

At last the evil days were come
  That saw the red cross fall;
She hears the rebels' rattling drum,—
  Farewell to Frankland Hall!

I tell you, as my tale began,
  The hall is standing still;
And you, kind listener, maid or man,
  May see it if you will.

The box is glistening huge and green,
  Like trees the lilacs grow,
Three elms high-arching still are seen,
  And one lies stretched below.

The hangings, rough with velvet flowers,
  Flap on the latticed wall;
And o'er the mossy ridge-pole towers
  The rock-hewn chimney tall.

The doors on mighty hinges clash
  With massive bolt and bar,
The heavy English-moulded sash
  Scarce can the night-winds jar.

Behold the chosen room he sought
  Alone, to fast and pray,
Each year, as chill November brought
  The dismal earthquake day.

There hung the rapier blade he wore,
  Bent in its flattened sheath ;
The coat the shrieking woman tore,
  Caught in her clenching teeth ;—

The coat with tarnished silver lace
  She snapped at as she slid,
And down upon her death-white face
  Crashed the huge coffin's lid.

A graded terrace yet remains ;
  If on its turf you stand
And look along the wooded plains
  That stretch on either hand,

The broken forest walls define
  A dim, receding view,
Where, on the far horizon's line,
  He cut his vista through.

If further story you shall crave,
  Or ask for living proof,
Go, see old Julia, born a slave
  Beneath Sir Harry's roof.

She told me half that I have told,
And she remembers well
The mansion as it looked of old
Before its glories fell;—

The box, when round the terraced square
Its glossy wall was drawn;
The climbing vines, the snow-balls fair,
The roses on the lawn.

And Julia says, with truthful look
Stamped on her wrinkled face,
That in her own black hands she took
The coat with silver lace.

And you may hold the story light,
Or, if you like, believe;
But there it was, the woman's bite,—
A mouthful from the sleeve.

Now go your ways;—I need not tell
The moral of my rhyme;
But, youths and maidens, ponder well
This tale of olden time!

THE PLOUGHMAN.

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CLEAR the brown path, to meet his coulter's gleam!
Lo! on he comes, behind his smoking team,
With toil's bright dew-drops on his sunburnt brow,
The lord of earth, the hero of the plough!

First in the field before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done,
Line after line, along the bursting sod,
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod;
Still, where he treads, the stubborn clods divide,
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves;
Up the steep hillside, where the labouring train
Slants the long track that scores the level plain;

Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,
The patient convoy breaks its destined way;
At every turn the loosening chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round,
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labour brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings;
This is the page, whose letters shall be seen
Changed by the sun to words of living green;
This is the scholar, whose immortal pen
Spells the first lesson hunger taught to men;
These are the lines which heaven-commanded Toil
Shows on his deed,—the charter of the soil!

O gracious Mother, whose benignant breast
Wakes us to life, and lulls us all to rest,
How thy sweet features, kind to every clime,
Mock with their smile the wrinkled front of time!
We stain thy flowers—they blossom o'er the dead;
We rend thy bosom, and it gives us bread;

O'er the red field that trampling strife has
torn
Waves the green plumage of thy tasselled
corn;
Our maddening conflicts scar thy fairest
plain,
Still thy soft answer is the growing grain.
Yet, O our Mother, while uncounted charms
Steal round our hearts in thine embracing
arms,
Let not our virtues in thy love decay,
And thy fond sweetness waste our strength
away.

No! by these hills, whose banners now
displayed
In blazing cohorts Autumn has arrayed;
By yon twin summits, on whose splintery
crests
The tossing hemlocks hold the eagles' nests;
By these fair plains the mountain circle
screens,
And feeds with streamlets from its dark
ravines,—
True to their home, these faithful arms shall
toil
To crown with peace their own untainted
soil;

And, true to God, to freedom, to mankind,
If her chained bandogs Faction shall unbind,
These stately forms, that bending even now
Bowed their strong manhood to the humble plough,
Shall rise erect, the guardians of the land,
The same stern iron in the same right hand,
Till o'er their hills the shouts of triumph run,
The sword has rescued what the ploughshare won!

SPRING.

WINTER is past; the heart of Nature warms
Beneath the wrecks of unresisted storms;
Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,
The southern slopes are fringed with tender green;
On sheltered banks, beneath the dripping eaves,
Spring's earliest nurslings spread their glowing leaves,
Bright with the hues from wider pictures won,
White, azure, golden,—drift, or sky, or sun,—

The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast
The frozen trophy torn from Winter's crest;
The violet, gazing on the arch of blue
Till her own iris wears its deepened hue;
The spendthrift crocus, bursting through
the mould,
Naked and shivering with his cup of gold.
Swelled with new life, the darkening elm
on high
Prints her thick buds against the spotted
sky;
On all her boughs the stately chestnut
cleaves
The gummy shroud that wraps her embryo
leaves;
The house-fly, stealing from his narrow
grave,
Drugged with the opiate that November
gave,
Beats with faint wing against the sunny
pane,
Or crawls, tenacious, o'er its lucid plain:
From shaded chinks of lichen-crusted walls,
In languid curves, the gliding serpent
crawls;
The bog's green harper, thawing from his
sleep,
Twangs a hoarse note, and tries a shortened
leap;

On floating rails that face the softening noons
The still shy turtles range their dark platoons,
Or, toiling aimless o'er the mellowing fields,
Trail through the grass their tessellated shields.

At last young April, ever frail and fair,
Wooed by her playmate with the golden hair,
Chased to the margin of receding floods
O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds,
In tears and blushes sighs herself away,
And hides her cheek beneath the flowers of May.

Then the proud tulip lights her beacon blaze,
Her clustering curls the hyacinth displays;
O'er her tall blades the crested fleur-de-lis,
Like blue-eyed Pallas, towers erect and free;
With yellower flames the lengthened sunshine glows,
And love lays bare the passion-breathing rose;
Queen of the lake, along its reedy verge
The rival lily hastens to emerge,
Her snowy shoulders glistening as she strips,
Till morn is sultan of her parted lips.

Then bursts the song from every leafy glade,
The yielding season's bridal serenade;
Then flash the wings returning Summer calls
Through the deep arches of her forest halls,—
The bluebird, breathing from his azure plumes
The fragrance borrowed where the myrtle blooms;
The thrush, poor wanderer, dropping meekly down,
Clad in his remnant of autumnal brown;
The oriole, drifting like a flake of fire
Rent by a whirlwind from a blazing spire.
The robin, jerking his spasmodic throat,
Repeats, imperious, his *staccato* note;
The crack-brained bobolink courts his crazy mate,
Poised on a bulrush tipsy with his weight;
Nay, in his cage the lone canary sings,
Feels the soft air, and spreads his idle wings.

Why dream I here within these caging walls,
Deaf to her voice, while blooming Nature calls;
Peering and gazing with insatiate looks
Through blinding lenses, or in wearying books?

Off, gloomy spectres of the shrivelled past!
Fly with the leaves that fill the autumn blast!
Ye imps of Science, whose relentless chains
Lock the warm tides within these living veins,
Close your dim cavern, while its captive strays
Dazzled and giddy in the morning's blaze!

THE STUDY.

YET in the darksome crypt I left so late,
Whose only altar is its rusted grate,—
Sepulchral, rayless, joyless as it seems,
Shamed by the glare of May's refulgent beams,—
While the dim seasons dragged their shrouded train,
Its paler splendours were not quite in vain.
From these dull bars the cheerful firelight's glow
Streamed through the casement o'er the spectral snow;
Here, while the night-wind wreaked its frantic will
On the loose ocean and the rock-bound hill,

Rent the cracked topsail from its quivering
yard,
And rived the oak a thousand storms had
scarred,
Fenced by these walls the peaceful taper
shone,
Nor felt a breath to slant its trembling cone.

Not all unblest the mild interior scene
When the red curtain spread its falling
screen ;
O'er some light task the lonely hours were
passed,
And the long evening only flew too fast ;
Or the wide chair its leathern arms would
lend
In genial welcome to some easy friend,
Stretched on its bosom with relaxing nerves,
Slow moulding, plastic, to its hollow curves;
Perchance indulging, if of generous creed,
In brave Sir Walter's dream-compelling
weed.
Or, happier still, the evening hour would
bring
To the round table its expected ring,
And while the punch-bowl's sounding depths
were stirred,—
Its silver cherubs smiling as they heard,—

Our hearts would open, as at evening's hour
The close-sealed primrose frees its hidden flower.

Such the warm life this dim retreat has known,
Not quite deserted when its guests were flown;
Nay, filled with friends, an unobtrusive set,
Guiltless of calls and cards and etiquette,
Ready to answer, never known to ask,
Claiming no service, prompt for every task.

On those dark shelves no housewife hand profanes,
O'er his mute files the monarch folio reigns;
A mingled race, the wreck of chance and time,
That talk all tongues and breathe of every clime,
Each knows his place, and each may claim his part
In some quaint corner of his master's heart.
This old Decretal, won from Kloss's hoards,
Thick-leaved, brass-cornered, ribbed with oaken boards,
Stands the gray patriarch of the graver rows,
Its fourth ripe century narrowing to its close;

Not daily conned, but glorious still to view,
With glistening letters wrought in red and blue,
There towers Stagira's all-embracing sage,
The Aldine anchor on his opening page;
There sleep the births of Plato's heavenly mind,
In yon dark tomb by jealous clasps confined,
"Olim e libris" (dare I call it mine?)
Of Yale's grave Head and Killingworth's divine!
In those square sheets the songs of Maro fill
The silvery types of smooth-leaved Baskerville;
High over all, in close, compact array,
Their classic wealth the Elzevirs display.
In lower regions of the sacred space
Range the dense volumes of a humbler race;
There grim chirurgeons all their mysteries teach,
In spectral pictures, or in crabbed speech;
Harvey and Haller, fresh from Nature's page,
Shoulder the dreamers of an earlier age,
Lully and Geber, and the learned crew
That loved to talk of all they could not do.
Why count the rest,—those names of later days
That many love, and all agree to praise,—

Or point the titles, where a glance may read
The dangerous lines of party or of creed?
Too well, perchance, the chosen list would show
What few may care and none can claim to know.
Each has his features, whose exterior seal
A brush may copy, or a sunbeam steal;
Go to his study,—on the nearest shelf
Stands the mosaic portrait of himself.

What though for months the tranquil dust descends,
Whitening the heads of these mine ancient friends,
While the damp offspring of the modern press
Flaunts on my table with its pictured dress;
Not less I love each dull familiar face,
Nor less should miss it from the appointed place;
I snatch the book, along whose burning leaves
His scarlet web our wild romancer weaves,
Yet, while proud Hester's fiery pangs I share,
My old MAGNALIA must be standing *there*!

THE BELLS.

WHEN o'er the street the morning peal is flung
From yon tall belfry with the brazen tongue,
Its wide vibrations, wafted by the gale,
To each far listener tell a different tale.
The sexton, stooping to the quivering floor
Till the great caldron spills its brassy roar,
Whirls the hot axle, counting, one by one,
Each dull concussion, till his task is done.
Toil's patient daughter, when the welcome note
Clangs through the silence from the steeple's throat,
Streams, a white unit, to the checkered street,
Demure, but guessing whom she soon shall meet;
The bell, responsive to her secret flame,
With every note repeats her lover's name.
The lover, tenant of the neighbouring lane,
Sighing, and fearing lest he sigh in vain,
Hears the stern accents, as they come and go,
Their only burden one despairing No!

Ocean's rough child, whom many a shore has known
Ere homeward breezes swept him to his own,
Starts at the echo as it circles round,
A thousand memories kindling with the sound;
The early favourite's unforgotten charms,
Whose blue initials stain his tawny arms;
His first farewell, the flapping canvas spread,
The seaward streamers crackling overhead,
His kind, pale mother, not ashamed to weep
Her first-born's bridal with the haggard deep,
While the brave father stood with tearless eye,
Smiling and choking with his last good-bye.

'Tis but a wave, whose spreading circle beats,
With the same impulse, every nerve it meets,
Yet who shall count the varied shapes that ride
On the round surge of that aërial tide!
O child of earth! If floating sounds like these
Steal from thyself their power to wound or please,

If here or there thy changing will inclines,
As the bright zodiac shifts its rolling signs,
Look at thy heart, and when its depths are known,
Then try thy brother's, judging by thine own,
But keep thy wisdom to the narrower range,
While its own standards are the sport of change,
Nor count us rebels when we disobey
The passing breath that holds thy passion's sway.

NON-RESISTANCE.

PERHAPS too far in these considerate days
Has patience carried her submissive ways;
Wisdom has taught us to be calm and meek,
To take one blow, and turn the other cheek;
It is not written what a man shall do,
If the rude caitiff smite the other too!

Land of our fathers, in thine hour of need
God help thee, guarded by the passive creed!
As the lone pilgrim trusts to beads and cowl,
When through the forest rings the gray wolf's howl;

As the deep galleon trusts her gilded prow
When the black corsair slants athwart her bow ;
As the poor pheasant, with his peaceful mien,
Trusts to his feathers, shining golden-green,
When the dark plumage with the crimson beak
Has rustled shadowy from its splintered peak,—
So trust thy friends, whose babbling tongues would charm
The lifted sabre from thy foeman's arm,
Thy torches ready for the answering peal
From bellowing fort and thunder-freighted keel !

THE MORAL BULLY.

YON whey-faced brother, who delights to wear
A weedy flux of ill-conditioned hair,
Seems of the sort that in a crowded place
One elbows freely into smallest space ;
A timid creature, lax of knee and hip,
Whom small disturbance whitens round the lip ;

One of those harmless spectacled machines,
The Holy-Week of Protestants convenes;
Whom school-boys question if their walk transcends
The last advices of maternal friends;
Whom John, obedient to his master's sign,
Conducts, laborious, up to *ninety-nine*,
While Peter, glistening with luxurious scorn,
Husks his white ivories like an ear of corn;
Dark in the brow and bilious in the cheek,
Whose yellowish linen flowers but once a week,
Conspicuous, annual, in their threadbare suits,
And the laced high-lows which they call their boots,
Well mayst thou *shun* that dingy front severe,
But him, O stranger, him thou canst not *fear*!
Be slow to judge, and slower to despise,
Man of broad shoulders and heroic size!
The tiger, writhing from the boa's rings,
Drops at the fountain where the cobra stings.
In that lean phantom, whose extended glove
Points to the text of universal love,

Behold the master that can tame thee down
To crouch, the vassal of his Sunday frown ;
His velvet throat against thy corded wrist,
His loosened tongue against thy doubled fist !

The Moral Bully, though he never swears,
Nor kicks intruders down his entry stairs,
Though meekness plants his backward-sloping hat,
And non-resistance ties his white cravat,
Though his black broadcloth glories to be seen
In the same plight with Shylock's gaberdine,
Hugs the same passion to his narrow breast
That heaves the cuirass on the trooper's chest,
Hears the same hell-hounds yelling in his rear
That chase from port the maddened buccaneer,
Feels the same comfort while his acrid words
Turn the sweet milk of kindness into curds,
Or with grim logic prove, beyond debate,
That all we love is worthiest of our hate,
As the scarred ruffian of the pirate's deck,
When his long swivel rakes the staggering wreck !

Heaven keep us all! Is every rascal clown
Whose arm is stronger free to knock us down?
Has every scarecrow, whose cachectic soul
Seems fresh from Bedlam, airing on parole,
Who, though he carries but a doubtful trace
Of angel visits on his hungry face,
From lack of marrow or the coins to pay,
Has dodged some vices in a shabby way,
The right to stick us with his cutthroat terms,
And bait his homilies with his brother worms?

THE MIND'S DIET.

NO life worth naming ever comes to good
If always nourished on the self-same food;
The creeping mite may live so if he please,
And feed on Stilton till he turns to cheese,
But cool Magendie proves beyond a doubt,
If mammals try it, that their eyes drop out.

No reasoning natures find it safe to feed,
For their sole diet, on a single creed;

It spoils their eyeballs while it spares their
tongues,
And starves the heart to feed the noisy
lungs.

When the first larvæ on the elm are seen,
The crawling wretches, like its leaves, are
green;
Ere chill October shakes the latest down,
They, like the foliage, change their tint to
brown;
On the blue flower a bluer flower you spy,
You stretch to pluck it—'tis a butterfly;
The flattened tree-toads so resemble bark,
They're hard to find as Ethiops in the dark;
The woodcock, stiffening to fictitious mud,
Cheats the young sportsman thirsting for
his blood;
So by long living on a single lie,
Nay, on one truth, will creatures get its
dye;
Red, yellow, green, they take their subject's
hue,—
Except when squabbling turns them black
and blue!

OUR LIMITATIONS.

WE trust and fear, we question and believe,
From life's dark threads a trembling faith to weave,
Frail as the web that misty night has spun,
Whose dew-gemmed awnings glitter in the sun.
While the calm centuries spell their lessons out,
Each truth we conquer spreads the realm of doubt;
When Sinai's summit was Jehovah's throne,
The chosen Prophet knew his voice alone;
When Pilate's hall that awful question heard,
The Heavenly Captive answered not a word.

Eternal Truth! beyond our hopes and fears
Sweep the vast orbits of thy myriad spheres!
From age to age, while History carves sublime
On her waste rock the flaming curves of time,
How the wild swayings of our planet show
That worlds unseen surround the world we know.

THE OLD PLAYER.

THE curtain rose; in thunders long and loud
The galleries rung; the veteran actor bowed.
In flaming line the telltales of the stage
Showed on his brow the autograph of age;
Pale, hueless waves amid his clustered hair,
And umbered shadows, prints of toil and care;
Round the wide circle glanced his vacant eye,—
He strove to speak,—his voice was but a sigh.

Year after year had seen its short-lived race
Flit past the scenes and others take their place;
Yet the old prompter watched his accents still,
His name still flaunted on the evening's bill.
Heroes, the monarchs of the scenic floor,
Had died in earnest and were heard no more;
Beauties, whose cheeks such roseate bloom o'erspread
They faced the footlights in unborrowed red,

Had faded slowly through successive shades
To gray duennas, foils of younger maids;
Sweet voices lost the melting tones that start
With Southern throbs the sturdy Saxon heart,
While fresh sopranos shook the painted sky
With their long, breathless, quivering locust-cry.
Yet there he stood,—the man of other days,
In the clear present's full, unsparing blaze,
As on the oak a faded leaf that clings
While a new April spreads its burnished wings.

How bright yon rows that soared in triple tier,
Their central sun the flashing chandelier!
How dim the eye that sought with doubtful aim
Some friendly smile it still might dare to claim!
How fresh these hearts! his own how worn and cold!
Such the sad thoughts that long-drawn sigh had told.

No word yet faltered on his trembling tongue;
Again, again, the crashing galleries rung.

As the old guardsman at the bugle's blast
Hears in its strain the echoes of the past,
So, as the plaudits rolled and thundered round,
A life of memories startled at the sound.

He lived again,—the page of earliest days,—
Days of small fee and parsimonious praise;
Then lithe young Romeo—hark that silvered tone,
From those smooth lips—alas! they were his own.
Then the bronzed Moor, with all his love and woe,
Told his strange tale of midnight melting snow;
And dark-plumed Hamlet, with his cloak and blade,
Looked on the royal ghost, himself a shade.
All in one flash, his youthful memories came,
Traced in bright hues of evanescent flame,
As the spent swimmer's in the lifelong dream,
While the last bubble rises through the stream.

Call him not old, whose visionary brain
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.

For him in vain the envious seasons roll
Who bears eternal summer in his soul.
If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,
Spring with her birds, or children at their play,
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art,
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,
Turn to the record where his years are told,—
Count his gray hairs,—they cannot make him old!

What magic power has changed the faded mime?
One breath of memory on the dust of time.
As the last window in the buttressed wall
Of some gray minster tottering to its fall,
Though to the passing crowd its hues are spread,
A dull mosaic, yellow, green, and red,
Viewed from within, a radiant glory shows
When through its pictured screen the sunlight flows,
And kneeling pilgrims on its storied pane
See angels glow in every shapeless stain;
So streamed the vision through his sunken eye,
Clad in the splendours of his morning sky.

All the wild hopes his eager boyhood knew,
All the young fancies riper years proved true,
The sweet, low-whispered words, the winning glance
From queens of song, from Houris of the dance,
Wealth's lavish gift, and Flattery's soothing phrase,
And Beauty's silence when her blush was praise,
And melting Pride, her lashes wet with tears,
Triumphs and banquets, wreaths and crowns and cheers,
Pangs of wild joy that perish on the tongue,
And all that poets dream, but leave unsung!

In every heart some viewless founts are fed
From far-off hillsides where the dews were shed;
On the worn features of the weariest face
Some youthful memory leaves its hidden trace
As in old gardens left by exiled kings
The marble basins tell of hidden springs,
But, gray with dust, and overgrown with weeds,
Their choking jets the passer little heeds,

Till time's revenges break their seals away,
And, clad in rainbow light, the waters play.

Good night, fond dreamer! let the curtain
fall:
The world's a stage, and we are players all.
A strange rehearsal! Kings without their
crowns,
And threadbare lords, and jewel-wearing
clowns,
Speak the vain words that mock their
throbbing hearts,
As Want, stern prompter! spells them out
their parts.
The tinselled hero whom we praise and pay
Is twice an actor in a twofold play.
We smile at children when a painted screen
Seems to their simple eyes a real scene;
Ask the poor hireling, who has left his
throne
To seek the cheerless home he calls his
own,
Which of his double lives most real seems,
The world of solid fact or scenic dreams?
Canvas, or clouds,—the footlights, or the
spheres,—
The play of two short hours, or seventy
years?

Dream on! Though Heaven may woo our
open eyes,
Through their closed lids we look on fairer
skies;
Truth is for other worlds, and hope for this;
The cheating future lends the present's
bliss;
Life is a running shade, with fettered hands,
That chases phantoms over shifting sands;
Death a still spectre on a marble seat,
With ever clutching palms and shackled
feet;
The airy shapes that mock life's slender
chain,
The flying joys he strives to clasp in vain,
Death only grasps; to live is to pursue,—
Dream on! there's nothing but illusion true!

A POEM.

DEDICATION OF THE PITTSFIELD CEMETERY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1850.

ANGEL of Death! extend thy silent
reign!
Stretch thy dark sceptre o'er this new
domain!
No sable car along the winding road
Has borne to earth its unresisting load;

No sudden mound has risen yet to show
Where the pale slumberer folds his arms below;
No marble gleams to bid his memory live
In the brief lines that hurrying Time can give;
Yet, O Destroyer! from thy shrouded throne
Look on our gift; this realm is all thine own!

Fair is the scene; its sweetness oft beguiled
From their dim paths the children of the wild;
The dark-haired maiden loved its grassy dells,
The feathered warrior claimed its wooded swells,
Still on its slopes the ploughman's ridges show
The pointed flints that left his fatal bow,
Chipped with rough art and slow barbarian toil,—
Last of his wrecks that strews the alien soil!
Here spread the fields that heaped their ripened store
Till the brown arms of Labour held no more;

The scythe's broad meadow with its dusky blush ;
The sickle's harvest with its velvet flush ;
The green-haired maize, her silken tresses laid,
In soft luxuriance, on her harsh brocade ;
The gourd that swells beneath her tossing plume ;
The coarser wheat that rolls in lakes of bloom,—
Its coral stems and milk-white flowers alive
With the wide murmurs of the scattered hive ;
Here glowed the apple with the pencilled streak
Of morning painted on its southern cheek ;
The pear's long necklace strung with golden drops,
Arched, like the banian, o'er its pillared props ;
Here crept the growths that paid the labourer's care
With the cheap luxuries wealth consents to spare ;
Here sprang the healing herbs which could not save
The hand that reared them from the neighbouring grave.

Yet all its varied charms, forever free
From task and tribute, Labour yields to thee:
No more, when April sheds her fitful rain,
The sower's hand shall cast its flying grain;
No more, when Autumn strews the flaming leaves,
The reaper's band shall gird its yellow sheaves;
For thee alike the circling seasons flow
Till the first blossoms heave the latest snow.
In the stiff clod below the whirling drifts,
In the loose soil the springing herbage lifts,
In the hot dust beneath the parching weeds,
Life's withering flower shall drop its shrivelled seeds;
Its germ entranced in thy unbreathing sleep
Till what thou sowest mightier angels reap!

Spirit of Beauty! let thy graces blend
With loveliest Nature all that Art can lend.
Come from the bowers where Summer's life-blood flows
Through the red lips of June's half-open rose,
Dressed in bright hues, the loving sunshine's dower;
For tranquil Nature owns no mourning flower.

Come from the forest where the beech's screen
Bars the fierce noonbeam with its flakes of green ;
Stay the rude axe that bares the shadowy plains,
Stanch the deep wound that dries the maple's veins.
Come with the stream whose silver-braided rills
Fling their unclasping bracelets from the hills,
Till in one gleam, beneath the forest's wings,
Melts the white glitter of a hundred springs.
Come from the steeps where look majestic forth
From their twin thrones the Giants of the North
On the huge shapes, that, crouching at their knees,
Stretch their broad shoulders, rough with shaggy trees.
Through the wide waste of ether, not in vain,
Their softened gaze shall reach our distant plain ;
There, while the mourner turns his aching eyes
On the blue mounds that print the bluer skies,

Nature shall whisper that the fading view
Of mightiest grief may wear a heavenly hue.
Cherub of Wisdom ! let thy marble page
Leave its sad lesson, new to every age ;
Teach us to live, not grudging every breath
To the chill winds that waft us on to death,
But ruling calmly every pulse it warms,
And tempering gently every word it forms.
Seraph of Love ! in heaven's adoring zone,
Nearest of all around the central throne,
While with soft hands the pillowed turf we spread
That soon shall hold us in its dreamless bed,
With the low whisper,—Who shall first be laid
In the dark chamber's yet unbroken shade?—
Let thy sweet radiance shine rekindled here,
And all we cherish grow more truly dear.
Here in the gates of Death's o'erhanging vault,
Oh, teach us kindness for our brother's fault:
Lay all our wrongs beneath this peaceful sod,
And lead our hearts to Mercy and its God.

FATHER of all ! in Death's relentless claim
We read thy mercy by its sterner name ;

In the bright flower that decks the solemn bier
We see thy glory in its narrowed sphere;
In the deep lessons that affliction draws
We trace the curves of thy encircling laws;
In the long sigh that sets our spirits free
We own the love that calls us back to Thee!

Through the hushed street, along the silent plain,
The spectral future leads its mourning train,
Dark with the shadows of uncounted bands,
Where man's white lips and woman's wringing hands
Track the still burden, rolling slow before,
That love and kindness can protect no more;
The smiling babe that, called to mortal strife,
Shuts its meek eyes and drops its little life;
The drooping child who prays in vain to live,
And pleads for help its parent cannot give;
The pride of beauty stricken in its flower;
The strength of manhood broken in an hour;
Age in its weakness, bowed by toil and care,
Traced in sad lines beneath its silvered hair.

The sun shall set, and heaven's resplendent spheres
Gild the smooth turf unhallowed yet by tears,

But ah! how soon the evening stars will shed
Their sleepless light around the slumbering dead!

Take them, O Father, in immortal trust!
Ashes to ashes, dust to kindred dust,
Till the last angel rolls the stone away,
And a new morning brings eternal day!

TO GOVERNOR SWAIN.

DEAR GOVERNOR, if my skiff might brave
The winds that lift the ocean wave
The mountain stream that loops and swerves
Through my broad meadow's channelled curves
Should waft me on from bound to bound
To where the River weds the Sound,
The Sound should give me to the Sea,
That to the Bay, the Bay to thee.
It may not be; too long the track
To follow down or struggle back.
The sun has set on fair Naushon
Long ere my western blaze is gone;
The ocean disk is rolling dark
In shadows round your swinging bark,

While yet the yellow sunset fills
The stream that scarfs my spruce-clad hills;
The day-star wakes your island deer
Long ere my barnyard chanticleer;
Your mists are soaring in the blue
While mine are sparks of glittering dew.

It may not be; oh, would it might,
Could I live o'er that glowing night!
What golden hours would come to life,
What goodly feats of peaceful strife,—
Such jests, that, drained of every joke,
The very bank of language broke,—
Such deeds, that Laughter nearly died
With stitches in his belted side;
While Time, caught fast in pleasure's chain,
His double goblet snapped in twain,
And stood with half in either hand,—
Both brimming full,—but not of sand!

It may not be; I strive in vain
To break my slender household chain,—
Three pairs of little clasping hands,
One voice, that whispers, not commands.
Even while my spirit flies away,
My gentle jailers murmur nay;
All shapes of elemental wrath
They raise along my threatened path;

The storm grows black, the waters rise,
The mountains mingle with the skies,
The mad tornado scoops the ground,
The midnight robber prowls around,—
Thus, kissing every limb they tie,
They draw a knot and heave a sigh,
Till, fairly netted in the toil,
My feet are rooted to the soil.
Only the soaring wish is free!—
And that, dear Governor, flies to thee!

PITTSFIELD, 1851.

TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND.

THE seed that wasteful autumn cast
To waver on its stormy blast,
Long o'er the wintry desert tost,
Its living germ has never lost.
Dropped by the weary tempest's wing,
It feels the kindling ray of spring,
And, starting from its dream of death,
Pours on the air its perfumed breath.

So, parted by the rolling flood,
The love that springs from common blood
Needs but a single sunlight hour
Of mingling smiles to bud and flower;
Unharmed its slumbering life has flown,
From shore to shore, from zone to zone,

Where summer's falling roses stain
The tepid waves of Pontchartrain,
Or where the lichen creeps below
Katahdin's wreaths of whirling snow.

Though fiery sun and stiffening cold
May change the fair ancestral mould,
No winter chills, no summer drains
The life-blood drawn from English veins,
Still bearing wheresoe'er it flows
The love that with its fountain rose,
Unchanged by space, unwronged by time,
From age to age, from clime to clime!

1852.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

COME, spread your wings, as I spread mine,
And leave the crowded hall
For where the eyes of twilight shine
O'er evening's western wall.

These are the pleasant Berkshire hills,
Each with its leafy crown;
Hark! from their sides a thousand rills
Come singing sweetly down.

A thousand rills ; they leap and shine,
  Strained through the shadowy nooks,
Till, clasped in many a gathering twine,
  They swell a hundred brooks.

A hundred brooks, and still they run
  With ripple, shade, and gleam,
Till, clustering all their braids in one,
  They flow a single stream.

A bracelet spun from mountain mist,
  A silvery sash unwound,
With ox-bow curve and sinuous twist
  It writhes to reach the Sound.

This is my bark,—a pygmy's ship ;
  Beneath a child it rolls ;
Fear not,—one body makes it dip,
  But not a thousand souls.

Float we the grassy banks between ;
  Without an oar we glide ;
The meadows, dressed in living green,
  Unroll on either side.

Come, take the book we love so well,
  And let us read and dream
We see whate'er its pages tell,
  And sail an English stream.

Up to the clouds the lark has sprung,
  Still trilling as he flies ;
The linnet sings as there he sung ;
  The unseen cuckoo cries,

And daisies strew the banks along,
  And yellow kingcups shine,
With cowslips, and a primrose throng,
  And humble celandine.

Ah foolish dream ! when Nature nursed
  Her daughter in the West,
The fount was drained that opened first ;
  She bared her other breast.

On the young planet's orient shore
  Her morning hand she tried ;
Then turned the broad medallion o'er
  And stamped the sunset side.

Take what she gives, her pine's tall stem,
  Her elm with hanging spray ;
She wears her mountain diadem
  Still in her own proud way.

Look on the forests' ancient kings,
  The hemlock's towering pride :
Yon trunk had thrice a hundred rings,
  And fell before it died.

Nor think that Nature saves her bloom
And slights our grassy plain ;
For us she wears her court costume,—
Look on its broidered train ;

The lily with the sprinkled dots,
Brands of the noontide beam ;
The cardinal, and the blood-red spots,
Its double in the stream,

As if some wounded eagle's breast,
Slow throbbing o'er the plain,
Had left its airy path impressed
In drops of scarlet rain.

And hark ! and hark ! the woodland rings ;
There thrilled the thrush's soul ;
And look ! that flash of flamy wings,—
The fire-plumed oriole !

Above, the hen-hawk swims and swoops,
Flung from the bright, blue sky ;
Below, the robin hops, and whoops
His piercing, Indian cry.

Beauty runs virgin in the woods,
Robed in her rustic green,
And oft a longing thought intrudes,
As if we might have seen

Her every finger's every joint
  Ringed with some golden line,
Poet, whom Nature did anoint!
  Had our wild home been thine.

Yet think not so; old England's blood
  Runs warm in English veins;
But wafted o'er the icy flood
  Its better life remains:

Our children know each wildwood smell,
  The bayberry and the fern,
The man who does not know them well
  Is all too old to learn.

Be patient! On the breathing page
  Still pants our hurried past;
Pilgrim and soldier, saint and sage,—
  The poet comes the last!

Though still the lark-voiced matins ring
  The world has known so long;
The wood-thrush of the West shall sing
  Earth's last sweet even-song!

AFTER A LECTURE ON MOORE.

SHINE soft, ye trembling tears of light
  That strew the mourning skies;
Hushed in the silent dews of night
  The harp of Erin lies.

What though her thousand years have passed
Of poets, saints, and kings ;
Her echoes only hear the last
That swept those golden strings.

Fling o'er his mound, ye star-lit bowers,
The balmiest wreaths ye wear,
Whose breath has lent your earth-born flowers
Heaven's own ambrosial air.

Breathe, bird of night, thy softest tone,
By shadowy grove and rill ;
Thy song will soothe us while we own
That his was sweeter still.

Stay, pitying Time, thy foot for him
Who gave thee swifter wings,
Nor let thine envious shadow dim
The light his glory flings.

If in his cheek unholy blood
Burned for one youthful hour,
'Twas but the flushing of the bud
That blooms a milk-white flower.

Take him, kind mother, to thy breast,
Who loved thy smiles so well,
And spread thy mantle o'er his rest
Of rose and asphodel.

The bark has sailed the midnight sea,
  The sea without a shore,
That waved its parting sign to thee,—
  "A health to thee, Tom Moore!"

And thine, long lingering on the strand,
  Its bright-hued streamers furled,
Was loosed by age, with trembling hand,
  To seek the silent world.

Not silent! no, the radiant stars
  Still singing as they shine,
Unheard through earth's imprisoning bars,
  Have voices sweet as thine.

Wake, then, in happier realms above,
  The songs of bygone years,
Till angels learn those airs of love
  That ravished mortal ears!

AFTER A LECTURE ON KEATS.

"Purpureos spargam flores."

THE wreath that star-crowned Shelley gave
Is lying on thy Roman grave,
Yet on its turf young April sets
Her store of slender violets;

Though all the Gods their garlands shower,
I too may bring one purple flower.
Alas! what blossom shall I bring,
That opens in my Northern spring?
The garden beds have all run wild,
So trim when I was yet a child;
Flat plantains and unseemly stalks
Have crept across the gravel walks;
The vines are dead, long, long ago,
The almond buds no longer blow.
No more upon its mound I see
The azure, plume-bound fleur-de-lis;
Where once the tulips used to show,
In straggling tufts the pansies grow;
The grass has quenched my white-rayed
gem,
The flowering "Star of Bethlehem,"
Though its long blade of glossy green
And pallid stripe may still be seen.
Nature, who treads her nobles down,
And gives their birthright to the clown,
Has sown her base-born weedy things
Above the garden's queens and kings.
Yet one sweet flower of ancient race
Springs in the old familiar place.
When snows were melting down the vale,
And Earth unlaced her icy mail,
And March his stormy trumpet blew,
And tender green came peeping through,

I loved the earliest one to seek
That broke the soil with emerald beak,
And watch the trembling bells so blue
Spread on the column as it grew.
Meek child of earth ! thou wilt not shame
The sweet, dead poet's holy name ;
The God of music gave thee birth,
Called from the crimson-spotted earth,
Where, sobbing his young life away,
His own fair Hyacinthus lay.
The hyacinth my garden gave
Shall lie upon that Roman grave !

AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY.

ONE broad, white sail in Spezzia's
treacherous bay ;
On comes the blast ; too daring bark,
beware !
The cloud has clasped her ; lo ! it melts
away ;
The wide, waste waters, but no sail is
there.

Morning : a woman looking on the sea ;
Midnight : with lamps the long veranda
burns ;
Come, wandering sail, they watch, they
burn for thee !
Suns come and go, alas ! no bark returns.

And feet are thronging on the pebbly sands,
  And torches flaring in the weedy caves,
Where'er the waters lay with icy hands
  The shapes uplifted from their coral graves.

Vainly they seek; the idle quest is o'er;
  The coarse, dark women, with their hanging locks,
And lean, wild children gather from the shore
  To the black hovels bedded in the rocks.

But Love still prayed, with agonizing wail,
  "One, one last look, ye heaving waters, yield!"
Till Ocean, clashing in his jointed mail,
  Raised the pale burden on his level shield.

Slow from the shore the sullen waves retire;
  His form a nobler element shall claim;
Nature baptized him in ethereal fire,
  And Death shall crown him with a wreath of flame.

Fade, mortal semblance, never to return;
  Swift is the change within thy crimson shroud:
Seal the white ashes in the peaceful urn;
  All else has risen in yon silvery cloud.

Sleep where thy gentle Adonais lies,
  Whose open page lay on thy dying heart,
Both in the smile of those blue-vaulted skies,
  Earth's fairest dome of all divinest art.

Breathe for his wandering soul one passing sigh,
  O happier Christian, while thine eye grows dim,—
In all the mansions of the house on high,
  Say not that Mercy has not one for him!

AT THE CLOSE OF A COURSE OF LECTURES.

AS the voice of the watch to the mariner's dream,
As the footstep of Spring on the ice-girdled stream,
There comes a soft footstep, a whisper, to me,—
The vision is over,—the rivulet free!

We have trod from the threshold of turbulent March,
Till the green scarf of April is hung on the larch,

And down the bright hillside that welcomes
the day,
We hear the warm panting of beautiful May.

We will part before Summer has opened her
wing,
And the bosom of June swells the bodice of
Spring,
While the hope of the season lies fresh in
the bud,
And the young life of Nature runs warm in
our blood.

It is but a word, and the chain is unbound,
The bracelet of steel drops unclasped to the
ground ;
No hand shall replace it,—it rests where it
fell,—
It is but one word that we all know too
well.

Yet the hawk with the wildness untamed
in his eye,
If you free him, stares round ere he springs
to the sky ;
The slave whom no longer his fetters re-
strain
Will turn for a moment and look at his
chain.

Our parting is not as the friendship of years,
That chokes with the blessing it speaks through its tears;
We have walked in a garden, and, looking around,
Have plucked a few leaves from the myrtles we found.

But now at the gate of the garden we stand,
And the moment has come for unclasping the hand;
Will you drop it like lead, and in silence retreat
Like the twenty crushed forms from an omnibus seat?

Nay! hold it one moment,—the last we may share,—
I stretch it in kindness, and not for my fare;
You may pass through the doorway in rank or in file,
If your ticket from Nature is stamped with a smile.

For the sweetest of smiles is the smile as we part,
When the light round the lips is a ray from the heart;

And lest a stray tear from its fountain might swell,
We will seal the bright spring with a quiet farewell.

THE HUDSON.

AFTER A LECTURE AT ALBANY.

'TWAS a vision of childhood that came with its dawn,
Ere the curtain that covered life's day-star was drawn;
The nurse told the tale when the shadows grew long,
And the mother's soft lullaby breathed it in song.

"There flows a fair stream by the hills of the West,"—
She sang to her boy as he lay on her breast;
"Along its smooth margin thy fathers have played;
Beside its deep waters their ashes are laid."

I wandered afar from the land of my birth,
I saw the old rivers, renowned upon earth,

But fancy still painted that wide-flowing
stream
With the many-hued pencil of infancy's
dream.

I saw the green banks of the castle-crowned
Rhine,
Where the grapes drink the moonlight and
change it to wine;
I stood by the Avon, whose waves as they
glide
Still whisper his glory who sleeps at their
side.

But my heart would still yearn for the
sound of the waves
That sing as they flow by my forefathers'
graves;
If manhood yet honours my cheek with a
tear,
I care not who sees it,—no blush for it here!

Farewell to the deep-bosomed stream of the
West!
I fling this loose blossom to float on its breast;
Nor let the dear love of its children grow
cold,
Till the channel is dry where its waters have
rolled!

December 1854.

THE NEW EDEN.

MEETING OF THE BERKSHIRE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, AT STOCKBRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1854.

SCARCE could the parting ocean close,
Seamed by the *Mayflower's* cleaving bow,
When o'er the rugged desert rose
The waves that tracked the Pilgrim's plough.

Then sprang from many a rock-strewn field
The rippling grass, the nodding grain,
Such growths as English meadows yield
To scanty sun and frequent rain.

But when the fiery days were done,
And Autumn brought his purple haze,
Then, kindling in the slanted sun,
The hillsides gleamed with golden maize.

The food was scant, the fruits were few:
A red-streak glistening here and there;
Perchance in statelier precincts grew
Some stern old Puritanic pear.

Austere in taste, and tough at core,
  Its unrelenting bulk was shed,
To ripen in the Pilgrim's store
  When all the summer sweets were fled.

Such was his lot, to front the storm
  With iron heart and marble brow,
Nor ripen till his earthly form
  Was cast from life's autumnal bough.

But ever on the bleakest rock
  We bid the brightest beacon glow,
And still upon the thorniest stock
  The sweetest roses love to blow.

So on our rude and wintry soil
  We feed the kindling flame of art,
And steal the tropic's blushing spoil
  To bloom on Nature's ice-clad heart.

See how the softening Mother's breast
  Warms to her children's patient wiles,—
Her lips by loving Labour pressed
  Break in a thousand dimpling smiles,

From when the flushing bud of June
  Dawns with its first auroral hue,
Till shines the rounded harvest-moon,
  And velvet dahlias drink the dew.

Nor these the only gifts she brings;
  Look where the labouring orchard groans,
And yields its beryl-threaded strings
  For chestnut burs and hemlock cones.

Dear though the shadowy maple be,
  And dearer still the whispering pine,
Dearest yon russet-laden tree
  Browned by the heavy rubbing kine!

There childhood flung its rustling stone,
  There venturous boyhood learned to climb,—
How well the early graft was known
  Whose fruit was ripe ere harvest-time!

Nor be the Fleming's pride forgot,
  With swinging drops and drooping bells,
Freckled and splashed with streak and spot,
  On the warm-breasted, sloping swells;

Nor Persia's painted garden-queen,—
  Frail Houri of the trellised wall,—
Her deep-cleft bosom scarfed with green,—
  Fairest to see, and first to fall.

When man provoked his mortal doom,
  And Eden trembled as he fell,
When blossoms sighed their last perfume,
  And branches waved their long farewell,

One sucker crept beneath the gate,
  One seed was wafted o'er the wall,
One bough sustained his trembling weight;
  These left the garden,—these were all.

And far o'er many a distant zone
  These wrecks of Eden still are flung:
The fruits that Paradise hath known
  Are still in earthly gardens hung.

Yes, by our own unstoried stream
  The pink-white apple-blossoms burst
That saw the young Euphrates gleam,—
  That Gihon's circling waters nursed.

For us the ambrosial pear displays
  The wealth its arching branches hold,
Bathed by a hundred summery days
  In floods of mingling fire and gold.

And here, where beauty's cheek of flame
  With morning's earliest beam is fed,
The sunset-painted peach may claim
  To rival its celestial red.

What though in some unmoistened vale
  The summer leaf grow brown and sere,
Say, shall our star of promise fail
  That circles half the rolling sphere,

From beaches salt with bitter spray,
  O'er prairies green with softest rain,
And ridges bright with evening's ray,
  To rocks that shade the stormless main?

If by our slender-threaded streams
  The blade and leaf and blossom die,
If, drained by noontide's parching beams,
  The milky veins of Nature dry,

See, with her swelling bosom bare,
  Yon wild-eyed Sister in the West,—
The ring of Empire round her hair,
  The Indian's wampum on her breast!

We saw the August sun descend,
  Day after day, with blood-red stain,
And the blue mountains dimly blend
  With smoke-wreaths from the burning
    plain;

Beneath the hot Sirocco's wings
  We sat and told the withering hours,
Till heaven unsealed its hoarded springs,
  And bade them leap in flashing showers.

Yet in our Ishmael's thirst we knew
  The mercy of the Sovereign hand
Would pour the fountain's quickening dew
  To feed some harvest of the land.

No flaming swords of wrath surround
  Our second Garden of the Blest;
It spreads beyond its rocky bound,
  It climbs Nevada's glittering crest.

God keep the tempter from its gate!
  God shield the children, lest they fall
From their stern fathers' free estate,—
  Till Ocean is its only wall!

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1855.

NEW ENGLAND, we love thee; no time can erase
From the hearts of thy children the smile on thy face.
'Tis the mother's fond look of affection and pride,
As she gives her fair son to the arms of his bride.

His bride may be fresher in beauty's young flower;
She may blaze in the jewels she brings with her dower.

But passion must chill in Time's pitiless blast;
The one that first loved us will love to the last.

You have left the dear land of the lake and the hill,
But its winds and its waters will talk with you still.
"Forget not," they whisper, "your love is our debt,"
And echo breathes softly, "We never forget."

The banquet's gay splendours are gleaming around,
But your hearts have flown back o'er the waves of the Sound;
They have found the brown home where their pulses were born;
They are throbbing their way through the trees and the corn.

There are roofs, you remember, — their glory is fled;
There are mounds in the churchyard, — one sigh for the dead.

There are wrecks, there are ruins, all scattered around;
But Earth has no spot like that corner of ground.

Come, let us be cheerful,—remember last night,
How they cheered us, and—never mind—meant it all right;
To-night we harm nothing,—we love in the lump;
Here 's a bumper to Maine, in the juice of the pump!

Here 's to all the good people, wherever they be,
Who have grown in the shade of the liberty-tree;
We all love its leaves, and its blossoms and fruit,
But pray have a care of the fence round its root.

We should like to talk big; it 's a kind of a right,
When the tongue has got loose and the waistband grown tight;

But, as pretty Miss Prudence remarked to
her beau,
On its own heap of compost no biddy should
crow.

Enough! There are gentlemen waiting to
talk,
Whose words are to mine as the flower to
the stalk.
Stand by your old mother whatever befall;
God bless all her children! Good-night to
you all.

FAREWELL.

TO J. R. LOWELL.

FAREWELL, for the bark has her breast
to the tide,
And the rough arms of Ocean are stretched
for his bride;
The winds from the mountain stream over
the bay;
One clasp of the hand, then away and away!

I see the tall mast as it rocks by the shore;
The sun is declining, I see it once more;
To-day like the blade in a thick-waving field.
To-morrow the spike on a Highlander's
shield.

Alone, while the cloud pours its treacherous
breath,
With the blue lips all round her whose
kisses are death;
Ah, think not the breeze that is urging her
sail
Has left her unaided to strive with the gale.

There are hopes that play round her, like
fires on the mast,
That will light the dark hour till its danger
has passed;
There are prayers that will plead with the
storm when it raves,
And whisper "Be still!" to the turbulent
waves.

Nay, think not that Friendship has called
us in vain
To join the fair ring ere we break it again;
There is strength in its circle,—you lose the
bright star,
But its sisters still chain it, though shining
afar.

I give you one health in the juice of the vine,
The blood of the vineyard shall mingle with
mine;

Thus, thus let us drain the last dew-drops
of gold,
As we empty our hearts of the blessings
they hold.

April 29, 1855.

FOR THE MEETING OF THE BURNS CLUB.

1856.

THE mountains glitter in the snow
A thousand leagues asunder;
Yet here, amid the banquet's glow,
I hear their voice of thunder;
Each giant's ice-bound goblet clinks;
A flowing stream is summoned;
Wachusett to Ben Nevis drinks;
Monadnock to Ben Lomond!

Though years have clipped the eagle's plume
That crowned the chieftain's bonnet,
The sun still sees the heather bloom,
The silver mists lie on it;
With tartan kilt and philibeg,
What stride was ever bolder
Than his who showed the naked leg
Beneath the plaided shoulder?

The echoes sleep on Cheviot's hills,
That heard the bugles blowing,
When down their sides the crimson rills
With mingled blood were flowing;
The hunts where gallant hearts were game,
The slashing on the border,
The raid that swooped with sword and flame,
Give place to "law and order."

Not while the rocking steeples reel
With midnight tocsins ringing,
Not while the crashing war-notes peal,
God sets his poets singing;
The bird is silent in the night,
Or shrieks a cry of warning
While fluttering round the beacon-light,—
But hear him greet the morning!

The lark of Scotia's morning sky!
Whose voice may sing his praises?
With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,
He walked among the daisies,
Till through the cloud of fortune's wrong
He soared to fields of glory;
But left his land her sweetest song
And earth her saddest story.

'Tis not the forts the builder piles
That chain the earth together;
The wedded crowns, the sister isles,
Would laugh at such a tether;
The kindling thought, the throbbing words,
That set the pulses beating,
Are stronger than the myriad swords
Of mighty armies meeting.

Thus while within the banquet glows,
Without, the wild winds whistle,
We drink a triple health,—the Rose,
The Shamrock, and the Thistle!
Their blended hues shall never fade
Till War has hushed his cannon,—
Close-twined as ocean-currents braid
The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon!

ODE FOR WASHINGTON'S BIRTH-DAY.

CELEBRATION OF THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, FEBRUARY 22, 1856.

WELCOME to the day returning,
Dearer still as ages flow,
While the torch of Faith is burning,
Long as Freedom's altars glow!

See the hero whom it gave us
  Slumbering on a mother's breast;
For the arm he stretched to save us,
  Be its morn forever blest!

Hear the tale of youthful glory,
  While of Britain's rescued band
Friend and foe repeat the story,
  Spread his fame o'er sea and land,
Where the red cross, proudly streaming,
  Flaps above the frigate's deck,
Where the golden lilies, gleaming,
  Star the watch-towers of Quebec.

Look! The shadow on the dial
  Marks the hour of deadlier strife;
Days of terror, years of trial,
  Scourge a nation into life.
Lo, the youth, become her leader!
  All her baffled tyrants yield;
Through his arm the Lord hath freed her;
  Crown him on the tented field!

Vain is Empire's mad temptation!
  Not for him an earthly crown!
He whose sword hath freed a nation
  Strikes the offered sceptre down.

See the throneless Conqueror seated,
  Ruler by a people's choice;
See the Patriot's task completed;
  Hear the Father's dying voice!

"By the name that you inherit,
  By the sufferings you recall,
Cherish the fraternal spirit;
  Love your country first of all!
Listen not to idle questions
  If its bands may be untied;
Doubt the patriot whose suggestions
  Strive a nation to divide!"

Father! We, whose ears have tingled
  With the discord notes of shame,—
We, whose sires their blood have mingled
  In the battle's thunder-flame,—
Gathering, while this holy morning
  Lights the land from sea to sea,
Hear thy counsel, heed thy warning;
  Trust us, while we honour thee!

BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

JANUARY 18, 1856.

WHEN life hath run its largest round
  Of toil and triumph, joy and woe,
How brief a storied page is found
  To compass all its outward show!

The world-tried sailor tires and droops ;
  His flag is rent, his keel forgot ;
His farthest voyages seem but loops
  That float from life's entangled knot.

But when within the narrow space
  Some larger soul hath lived and wrought,
Whose sight was open to embrace
  The boundless realms of deed and thought,—

When, stricken by the freezing blast,
  A nation's living pillars fall,
How rich the storied page, how vast,
  A word, a whisper, can recall !

No medal lifts its fretted face,
  Nor speaking marble cheats your eye,
Yet, while these pictured lines I trace,
  A living image passes by :

A roof beneath the mountain pines ;
  The cloisters of a hill-girt plain ;
The front of life's embattled lines ;
  A mound beside the heaving main.

These are the scenes : a boy appears ;
  Set life's round dial in the sun,
Count the swift arc of seventy years,
  His frame is dust ; his task is done.

Yet pause upon the noontide hour,
  Ere the declining sun has laid
His bleaching rays on manhood's power,
  And look upon the mighty shade.

No gloom that stately shape can hide,
  No change uncrown its brow; behold!
Dark, calm, large-fronted, lightning-eyed,
  Earth has no double from its mould!

Ere from the fields by valour won
  The battle-smoke had rolled away,
And bared the blood-red setting sun,
  His eyes were opened on the day.

His land was but a shelving strip
  Black with the strife that made it free;
He lived to see its banners dip
  Their fringes in the Western sea.

The boundless prairies learned his name,
  His words the mountain echoes knew,
The Northern breezes swept his fame
  From icy lake to warm bayou.

In toil he lived; in peace he died;
  When life's full cycle was complete,
Put off his robes of power and pride,
  And laid them at his Master's feet.

His rest is by the storm-swept waves
  Whom life's wild tempests roughly tried,
Whose heart was like the streaming caves
  Of ocean, throbbing at his side.

Death's cold white hand is like the snow
  Laid softly on the furrowed hill,
It hides the broken seams below,
  And leaves the summit brighter still.

In vain the envious tongue upbraids;
  His name a nation's heart shall keep
Till morning's latest sunlight fades
  On the blue tablet of the deep!

THE VOICELESS.

WE count the broken lyres that rest
  Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
  The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
  And noisy Fame is proud to win them:—
Alas for those that never sing,
  But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
  Whose song has told their hearts' sad story,—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
  The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
  O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
  On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
  Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine,
  Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses,—
If singing breath or echoing chord
  To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
  As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

THE TWO STREAMS.

BEHOLD the rocky wall
  That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,
  In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.

The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends,—

From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee,—
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the Peaceful Sea!

THE PROMISE.

NOT charity we ask,
Nor yet thy gift refuse;
Please thy light fancy with the easy task
Only to look and choose.

The little-heeded toy
That wins thy treasured gold
May be the dearest memory, holiest joy,
Of coming years untold.

Heaven rains on every heart,
But there its showers divide,
The drops of mercy choosing, as they part,
The dark or glowing side.

One kindly deed may turn
The fountain of thy soul
To love's sweet day-star, that shall o'er thee burn
Long as its currents roll!

The pleasures thou hast planned,—
Where shall their memory be
When the white angel with the freezing hand
Shall sit and watch by thee?

Living, thou dost not live,
If mercy's spring run dry;
What heaven has lent thee wilt thou freely give,
Dying, thou shalt not die!

He promised even so!
To thee his lips repeat,—
Behold, the tears that soothed thy sister's woe
Have washed thy Master's feet!

March 20, 1859.

AVIS.

I MAY not rightly call thy name,—
Alas! thy forehead never knew
The kiss that happier children claim,
Nor glistened with baptismal dew.

Daughter of want and wrong and woe,
I saw thee with thy sister-band,
Snatched from the whirlpool's narrowing flow
By Mercy's strong yet trembling hand.

"Avis!"—With Saxon eye and cheek,
At once a woman and a child,
The saint uncrowned I came to seek
Drew near to greet us,—spoke, and smiled.

God gave that sweet, sad smile she wore
All wrong to shame, all souls to win,—
A heavenly sunbeam sent before
Her footsteps through a world of sin.

"And who is Avis?"—Hear the tale
The calm-voiced matrons gravely tell,—
The story known through all the vale
Where Avis and her sisters dwell.

With the lost children running wild,
Strayed from the hand of human care,
They find one little refuse child
Left helpless in its poisoned lair.

The primal mark is on her face,—
The chattel-stamp,—the pariah-stain
That follows still her hunted race,—
The curse without the crime of Cain.

How shall our smooth-turned phrase relate
The little suffering outcast's ail?
Not Lazarus at the rich man's gate
So turned the rose-wreathed revellers pale.

Ah, veil the living death from sight
That wounds our beauty-loving eye!
The children turn in selfish fright,
The white-lipped nurses hurry by.

Take her, dread Angel! Break in love
This bruised reed and make it thine!—
No voice descended from above,
But Avis answered, "She is mine."

The task that dainty menials spurn
The fair young girl has made her own ;
Her heart shall teach, her hand shall learn
The toils, the duties yet unknown.

So Love and Death in lingering strife
Stand face to face from day to day,
Still battling for the spoil of Life
While the slow seasons creep away.

Love conquers Death ; the prize is won ;
See to her joyous bosom pressed
The dusky daughter of the sun,—
The bronze against the marble breast !

Her task is done ; no voice divine
Has crowned her deeds with saintly fame.
No eye can see the aureole shine
That rings her brow with heavenly flame.

Yet what has holy page more sweet,
Or what had woman's love more fair,
When Mary clasped her Saviour's feet
With flowing eyes and streaming hair ?

Meek child of sorrow, walk unknown,
The Angel of that earthly throng,
And let thine image live alone
To hallow this unstudied song !

THE LIVING TEMPLE.

NOT in the world of light alone,
Where God has built his blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:
Look in upon thy wondrous frame,—
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,
Fired with a new and livelier blush,
While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
Forever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net

Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then, kindling each decaying part,
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,
Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds ;
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,
And flashes forth the sovereign will ;

Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine
To make these mystic temples thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms,
And mould it into heavenly forms!

AT A BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL.

TO J. R. LOWELL.

WE will not speak of years to-night,—
For what have years to bring
But larger floods of love and light,
And sweeter songs to sing?

We will not drown in wordy praise
The kindly thoughts that rise;
If Friendship own one tender phrase,
He reads it in our eyes.

We need not waste our school-boy art
To gild this notch of Time;—
Forgive me if my wayward heart
Has throbbed in artless rhyme.

Enough for him the silent grasp
That knits us hand in hand,
And he the bracelet's radiant clasp
That locks our circling band.

Strength to his hours of manly toil!
Peace to his starlit dreams!
Who loves alike the furrowed soil,
The music-haunted streams!

Sweet smiles to keep forever bright
The sunshine on his lips,
And faith that sees the ring of light
Round nature's last eclipse!

February 22, 1859.

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE.

TO J. F. CLARKE.

WHO is the shepherd sent to lead,
Through pastures green, the Master's sheep?
What guileless "Israelite indeed"
The folded flock may watch and keep?

He who with manliest spirit joins
The heart of gentlest human mould,
With burning light and girded loins,
To guide the flock, or watch the fold ;

True to all Truth the world denies,
Not tongue-tied for its gilded sin ;
Not always right in all men's eyes,
But faithful to the light within ;

Who asks no meed of earthly fame,
Who knows no earthly master's call,
Who hopes for man, through guilt and shame,
Still answering, "God is over all" ;

Who makes another's grief his own,
Whose smile lends joy a double cheer ;
Where lives the saint, if such be known?—
Speak softly,—such an one is here !

O faithful shepherd ! thou hast borne
The heat and burden of the day ;
Yet, o'er thee, bright with beams unshorn,
The sun still shows thine onward way.

To thee our fragrant love we bring,
In buds that April half displays,
Sweet first-born angels of the spring,
Caught in their opening hymn of praise.

What though our faltering accents fail,
Our captives know their message well,
Our words unbreathed their lips exhale,
And sigh more love than ours can tell.

April 4, 1860.

THE GRAY CHIEF.

FOR THE MEETING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY, 1859.

'TIS sweet to fight our battles o'er,
And crown with honest praise
The gray old chief, who strikes no more
The blow of better days.

Before the true and trusted sage
With willing hearts we bend,
When years have touched with hallowing age
Our Master, Guide, and Friend.

For all his manhood's labour past,
For love and faith long tried,
His age is honoured to the last,
Though strength and will have died.

But when, untamed by toil and strife,
Full in our front he stands,
The torch of light, the shield of life,
Still lifted in his hands,

No temple, though its walls resound
With bursts of ringing cheers,
Can hold the honours that surround
His manhood's twice-told years!

THE LAST LOOK.

W. W. SWAIN.

BEHOLD—not him we knew!
This was the prison which his soul looked through,
Tender, and brave, and true.

His voice no more is heard;
And his dead name—that dear familiar word—
Lies on our lips unstirred.

He spake with poet's tongue;
Living, for him the minstrel's lyre was strung:
He shall not die unsung!

Grief tried his love, and pain;
And the long bondage of his martyr-chain
Vexed his sweet soul,—in vain!

It felt life's surges break,
As, girt with stormy seas, his island lake,
Smiling while tempests wake.

How can we sorrow more?
Grieve not for him whose heart had gone before
To that untrodden shore!

Lo, through its leafy screen,
A gleam of sunlight on a ring of green,
Untrodden, half unseen!

Here let his body rest,
Where the calm shadows that his soul loved best
May slide above his breast.

Smooth his uncurtained bed;
And if some natural tears are softly shed,
It is not for the dead.

Fold the green turf aright
For the long hours before the morning's light,
And say the last Good Night!

And plant a clear white stone
Close by those mounds which hold his loved, his own,—
Lonely, but not alone.

Here let him sleeping lie,
Till Heaven's bright watchers slumber in the sky
And Death himself shall die!

NAUSHON, September 22, 1858.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, JR.

HE was all sunshine; in his face
The very soul of sweetness shone;
Fairest and gentlest of his race;
None like him we can call our own.

Something there was of one that died
In her fresh spring-time long ago,
Our first dear Mary, angel-eyed,
Whose smile it was a bliss to know.

Something of her whose love imparts
Such radiance to her day's decline,
We feel its twilight in our hearts
Bright as the earliest morning-shine.

Yet richer strains our eye could trace
That made our plainer mould more fair,
That curved the lip with happier grace,
That waved the soft and silken hair.

Dust unto dust! the lips are still
That only spoke to cheer and bless;
The folded hands lie white and chill
Unclasped from sorrow's last caress.

Leave him in peace; he will not heed
These idle tears we vainly pour,
Give back to earth the fading weed
Of mortal shape his spirit wore.

"Shall I not weep my heartstrings torn,
My flower of love that falls half blown,
My youth uncrowned, my life forlorn,
A thorny path to walk alone?"

O Mary! one who bore thy name,
Whose Friend and Master was divine,
Sat waiting silent till He came,
Bowed down in speechless grief like thine.

"Where have ye laid him?" "Come," they say,
Pointing to where the loved one slept;
Weeping, the sister led the way,—
And, seeing Mary, "Jesus wept."

He weeps with thee, with all that mourn,
And He shall wipe thy streaming eyes
Who knew all sorrows, woman-born—
Trust in his word; thy dead shall rise!

April 15, 1860.

MARTHA.

DIED JANUARY 7, 1861.

SEXTON! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
Her weary hands their labour cease;
Good-night, poor Martha,—sleep in peace!
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
For many a year has Martha said,
"I'm old and poor,—would I were dead!"
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
She'll bring no more, by day or night,
Her basket full of linen white.
Toll the bell!

Sexton ! Martha 's dead and gone ;
Toll the bell ! toll the bell !
'Tis fitting she should lie below
A pure white sheet of drifted snow.
Toll the bell !

Sexton, Martha 's dead and gone ;
Toll the bell ! toll the bell !
Sleep, Martha, sleep, to wake in light,
Where all the robes are stainless white.
Toll the bell !

MEETING OF THE ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE.

1857.

I THANK you, MR. PRESIDENT, you 've kindly broke the ice ;
Virtue should always be the first,—I 'm only SECOND VICE—
(A vice is something with a screw that 's made to hold its jaw
Till some old file has played away upon an ancient saw.)

Sweet brothers by the Mother's side, the babes of days gone by,
All nurslings of her Juno breasts, whose milk is never dry,

We come again, like half-grown boys, and gather at her beck
About her knees, and on her lap, and clinging round her neck.

We find her at her stately door, and in her ancient chair,
Dressed in the robes of red and green she always loved to wear.
Her eye has all its radiant youth, her cheek its morning flame;
We drop our roses as we go, hers flourish still the same.

We have been playing many an hour, and far away we've strayed,
Some laughing in the cheerful sun, some lingering in the shade;
And some have tired, and laid them down where darker shadows fall,—
Dear as her loving voice may be, they cannot hear its call.

What miles we've travelled since we shook the dew-drops from our shoes
We gathered on this classic green, so famed for heavy dues!

How many boys have joined the game, how many slipped away,
Since we 've been running up and down, and having out our play !

One boy at work with book and brief, and one with gown and band,
One sailing vessels on the pool, one digging in the sand,
One flying paper kites on change, one planting little pills,—
The seeds of certain annual flowers well known as little bills.

What maidens met us on our way, and clasped us hand in hand!
What cherubs,—not the legless kind, that fly, but never stand !
How many a youthful head we 've seen put on its silver crown !
What sudden changes back again to youth's empurpled brown !

But fairer sights have met our eyes, and broader lights have shone,
Since others lit their midnight lamps where once we trimmed our own ;

A thousand trains that flap the sky with
flags of rushing fire,
And, throbbing in the Thunderer's hand,
Thought's million-chorded lyre.

We 've seen the sparks of Empire fly beyond
the mountain bars,
Till, glittering o'er the Western wave, they
joined the setting stars ;
And ocean trodden into paths that trampling
giants ford,
To find the planet's vertebræ and sink its
spinal cord.

We 've tried reform,—and chloroform,—and
both have turned our brain ;
When France called up the photograph, we
roused the foe to pain ;
Just so those earlier sages shared the chaplet
of renown,—
Hers sent a bladder to the clouds, ours
brought their lightning down.

We 've seen the little tricks of life, its
varnish and veneer,
Its stucco-fronts of character flake off and
disappear,

We 've learned that oft the brownest hands
will heap the biggest pile,
And met with many a "perfect brick"
beneath a rimless "tile."

What dreams we 've had of deathless name,
as scholars, statesmen, bards,
While Fame, the lady with the trump, held
up her picture cards !
Till, having nearly played our game, she
gaily whispered, "Ah !
I said you should be something grand,—
you 'll soon be grandpapa."

Well, well, the old have had their day, the
young must take their turn ;
There 's something always to forget, and
something still to learn ;
But how to tell what 's old or young, the
tap-root from the sprigs,
Since Florida revealed her fount to Ponce
de Leon Twiggs ?

The wisest was a Freshman once, just freed
from bar and bolt,
As noisy as a kettle-drum, as leggy as a colt;

Don't be too savage with the boys,—the
Primer does not say
The kitten ought to go to church because
the cat doth prey.

The law of merit and of age is not the rule
of three;
Non constat that A. M. must prove as busy
as A. B.
When Wise the father tracked the son,
ballooning through the skies,
He taught a lesson to the old,—go thou and
do like Wise!

Now then, old boys, and reverend youth, of
high or low degree,
Remember how we only get one annual out
of three,
And such as dare to simmer down three
dinners into one
Must cut their salads mighty short, and
pepper well with fun.

I've passed my zenith long ago, it's time for
me to set;
A dozen planets wait to shine, and I am
lingering yet,

As sometimes in the blaze of day a milk-and-
watery moon
Stains with its dim and fading ray the
lustrous blue of noon.

Farewell ! yet let one echo rise to shake our
ancient hall ;
God save the Queen,—whose throne is here,
—the Mother of us all !
Till dawns the great commencement-day on
every shore and sea,
And "Expectantur" all mankind, to take
their last Degree !

THE PARTING SONG.

FESTIVAL OF THE ALUMNI, 1857.

THE noon of summer sheds its ray
On Harvard's holy ground ;
The Matron calls, the sons obey,
And gather smiling round.

CHORUS.

Then old and young together stand,
The sunshine and the snow,
As heart to heart, and hand in hand,
We sing before we go !

Her hundred opening doors have swung;
Through every storied hall
The pealing echoes loud have rung,
"Thrice welcome one and all!"
Then old and young, etc.

We floated through her peaceful bay,
To sail life's stormy seas;
But left our anchor where it lay
Beneath her green old trees.
Then old and young, etc.

As now we lift its lengthening chain,
That held us fast of old,
The rusted rings grow bright again,—
Their iron turns to gold.
Then old and young, etc.

Though scattered ere the setting sun,
As leaves when wild winds blow,
Our home is here, our hearts are one,
Till Charles forgets to flow.
Then old and young, etc.

FOR THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SANITARY ASSOCIATION.

1860.

WHAT makes the Healing Art divine?
The bitter drug we buy and sell,
The brands that scorch, the blades that shine,
The scars we leave, the "cures" we tell?

Are these thy glories, holiest Art,—
The trophies that adorn thee best,—
Or but thy triumph's meanest part,—
Where mortal weakness stands confessed?

We take the arms that Heaven supplies
For Life's long battle with Disease,
Taught by our various need to prize
Our frailest weapons, even these.

But ah! when Science drops her shield—
Its peaceful shelter proved in vain—
And bares her snow-white arm to wield
The sad, stern ministry of pain;

When shuddering o'er the fount of life,
She folds her heaven-anointed wings,
To lift unmoved the glittering knife
That searches all its crimson springs;

When, faithful to her ancient lore,
  She thrusts aside her fragrant balm
For blistering juice, or cankering ore,
  And tames them till they cure or calm ;

When in her gracious hand are seen
  The dregs and scum of earth and seas,
Her kindness counting all things clean
  That lend the sighing sufferer ease ;

Though, on the field that Death has won
  She save some stragglers in retreat ;—
These single acts of mercy done
  Are but confessions of defeat.

What though our tempered poisons save
  Some wrecks of life from aches and ails ;
Those grand specifics Nature gave
  Were never poised by weights or scales !

God lent his creatures light and air,
  And waters open to the skies ;
Man locks him in a stifling lair,
  And wonders why his brother dies !

In vain our pitying tears are shed,
  In vain we rear the sheltering pile
Where Art weeds out from bed to bed
  The plagues we planted by the mile !

Be that the glory of the past;
With these our sacred toils begin:
So flies in tatters from its mast
The yellow flag of sloth and sin,

And lo! the starry folds reveal
The blazoned truth we hold so dear:
To guard is better than to heal,—
The shield is nobler than the spear!

FOR THE BURNS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

JANUARY 25, 1859.

HIS birthday.—Nay, we need not speak
The name each heart is beating,—
Each glistening eye and flushing cheek
In light and flame repeating!

We come in one tumultuous tide,—
One surge of wild emotion,—
As crowding through the Frith of Clyde
Rolls in the Western Ocean;

As when yon cloudless, quartered moon
Hangs o'er each storied river,
The swelling breasts of Ayr and Doon
With sea-green wavelets quiver.

The century shrivels like a scroll,—
  The past becomes the present,—
And face to face, and soul to soul,
  We greet the monarch-peasant.

While Shenstone strained in feeble flights
  With Corydon and Phillis,—
While Wolfe was climbing Abraham's heights
  To snatch the Bourbon lilies,—

Who heard the wailing infant's cry,
  The babe beneath the sheeling,
Whose song to-night in every sky
  Will shake earth's starry ceiling,—

Whose passion-breathing voice ascends
  And floats like incense o'er us,
Whose ringing lay of friendship blends
  With labour's anvil chorus?

We love him, not for sweetest song,
  Though never tone so tender;
We love him, even in his wrong,—
  His wasteful self-surrender.

We praise him, not for gifts divine,—
  His Muse was born of woman,—
His manhood breathes in every line,—
  Was ever heart more human?

We love him, praise him, just for this:
In every form and feature,
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,
He saw his fellow-creature!

No soul could sink beneath his love,—
Not even angel blasted;
No mortal power could soar above
The pride that all outlasted!

Ay! Heaven had set one living man
Beyond the pedant's tether,—
His virtues, frailties, HE may scan,
Who weighs them all together!

I fling my pebble on the cairn
Of him, though dead, undying;
Sweet Nature's nursling, bonniest bairn
Beneath her daisies lying.

The waning suns, the wasting globe,
Shall spare the minstrel's story,—
The centuries weave his purple robe,
The mountain-mist of glory!

AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS.

AUGUST 29, 1859.

I REMEMBER—why, yes! God bless me!
and was it so long ago?
I fear I'm growing forgetful, as old folks
do, you know;
It must have been in 'forty—I would say
'thirty-nine—
We talked this matter over, I and a friend
of mine.

He said, "Well now, old fellow, I'm think-
ing that you and I,
If we act like other people, shall be older by
and by;
What though the bright blue ocean is smooth
as a pond can be,
There is always a line of breakers to fringe
the broadest sea.

"We're taking it mighty easy, but that is
nothing strange,
For up to the age of thirty we spend our
years like change;

But creeping up towards the forties, as fast as the old years fill,
And Time steps in for payment, we seem to change a bill."

"I know it," I said, "old fellow; you speak the solemn truth;
A man can't live to a hundred and likewise keep his youth;
But what if the ten years coming shall silver-streak my hair,
You know I shall then be forty; of course I shall not care.

"At forty a man grows heavy and tired of fun and noise;
Leaves dress to the five-and-twenties and love to the silly boys;
No foppish tricks at forty, no pinching of waists and toes,
But high-low shoes and flannels and good thick worsted hose."

But one fine August morning I found myself awake:
My birthday:—By Jove, I'm forty! Yes, forty, and no mistake!

Why, this is the very milestone, I think I used to hold,
That when a fellow had come to, a fellow would then be old!

But that is the young folks' nonsense; they 're full of their foolish stuff;
A man 's in his prime at forty,— I see *that* plain enough;
At *fifty* a man *is* wrinkled, and *may be* bald or gray;
I call men old at fifty, in spite of all they say.

At last comes another August with mist and rain and shine;
Its mornings are slowly counted and creep to twenty-nine,
And when on the western summits the fading light appears,
It touches with rosy fingers the last of my fifty years.

There have been both men and women whose hearts were firm and bold,
But there never was one of fifty that loved to say "I 'm old";

So any elderly person that strives to shirk
his years,
Make him stand up at a table and try him
by his peers.

Now here I stand at fifty, my jury gathered
round;
Sprinkled with dust of silver, but not yet
silver-crowned,
Ready to meet your verdict, waiting to hear
it told;
Guilty of fifty summers; speak! Is the
verdict *old*?

No! say that his hearing fails him; say
that his sight grows dim;
Say that he 's getting wrinkled and weak in
back and limb,
Losing his wits and temper, but pleading,
to make amends,
The youth of his fifty summers he finds in
his twenty friends.

BOSTON COMMON: THREE PICTURES.

FOR THE FAIR IN AID OF THE FUND TO PROCURE BALL'S STATUE OF WASHINGTON.

1630.

ALL overgrown with bush and fern,
And straggling clumps of tangled trees,
With trunks that lean and boughs that turn,
Bent eastward by the mastering breeze,—
With spongy bogs that drip and fill
A yellow pond with muddy rain,
Beneath the shaggy southern hill
Lies wet and low the Shawmut plain.
And hark! the trodden branches crack;
A crow flaps off with startled scream;
A straying woodchuck canters back;
A bittern rises from the stream;
Leaps from his lair a frightened deer;
An otter plunges in the pool;—
Here comes old Shawmut's pioneer,
The parson on his brindled bull!

1774.

The streets are thronged with trampling feet,
The northern hill is ridged with graves,
But night and morn the drum is beat
To frighten down the "rebel knaves."
The stones of King Street still are red,
And yet the bloody red-coats come:
I hear their pacing sentry's tread,
The click of steel, the tap of drum,
And over all the open green,
Where grazed of late the harmless kine,
The cannon's deepening ruts are seen,
The war-horse stamps, the bayonets shine.
The clouds are dark with crimson rain
Above the murderous hirelings' den,
And soon their whistling showers shall stain
The pipe-clayed belts of Gage's men.

186—.

Around the green, in morning light,
The spired and palaced summits blaze,
And, sunlike, from her Beacon-height
The dome-crowned city spreads her rays;
They span the waves, they belt the plains,
They skirt the roads with bands of white,
Till with a flash of gilded panes
Yon farthest hillside bounds the sight.

Peace, Freedom, Wealth! no fairer view,
  Though with the wild-bird's restless wings
We sailed beneath the noontide's blue
  Or chased the moonlight's endless rings!
Here, fitly raised by grateful hands
  His holiest memory to recall,
The Hero's, Patriot's image stands;
  He led our sires who won them all!

November 14, 1859.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA.

A NIGHTMARE DREAM BY DAYLIGHT.

DO you know the Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea?
  Have you met with that dreadful old man?
If you haven't been caught, you will be, you will be;
  For catch you he must and he can.

He doesn't hold on by your throat, by your throat,
  As of old in the terrible tale;
But he grapples you tight by the coat, by the coat,
  Till its buttons and button-holes fail.

There's the charm of a snake in his eye, in his eye,
And a polypus-grip in his hands;
You cannot go back, nor get by, nor get by,
If you look at the spot where he stands.

Oh, you're grabbed! See his claw on your sleeve, on your sleeve!
It is Sindbad's Old Man of the Sea!
You're a Christian, no doubt you believe, you believe:
You're a martyr, whatever you be!

Is the breakfast-hour past? They must wait, they must wait,
While the coffee boils sullenly down,
While the Johnny-cake burns on the grate, on the grate,
And the toast is done frightfully brown.

Yes, your dinner will keep; let it cool, let it cool,
And Madam may worry and fret,
And children half-starved go to school, go to school;
He can't think of sparing you yet.

Hark! the bell for the train! "Come along!
Come along!
For there isn't a second to lose."
"ALL ABOARD!" (He holds on.) "Fsht!
ding-dong! Fsht! ding-dong!"—
You can follow on foot, if you choose.

There's a maid with a cheek like a peach,
like a peach,
That is waiting for you in the church;—
But he clings to your side like a leech, like
a leech,
And you leave your lost bride in the lurch.

There's a babe in a fit,—hurry quick! hurry
quick!
To the doctor's as fast as you can!
The baby is off, while you stick, while you
stick,
In the grip of the dreadful Old Man!

I have looked on the face of the Bore, of the
Bore;
The voice of the Simple I know;
I have welcomed the Flat at my door, at my
door;
I have sat by the side of the Slow;

I have walked like a lamb by the friend, by the friend,
That stuck to my skirts like a burr;
I have borne the stale talk without end, without end,
Of the sitter whom nothing could stir:

But my hamstrings grow loose, and I shake, and I shake,
At the sight of the dreadful Old Man;
Yea, I quiver and quake, and I take, and I take,
To my legs with what vigour I can!

Oh the dreadful Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea!
He 's come back like the Wandering Jew!
He has had his cold claw upon me, upon me,—
And be sure that he 'll have it on you!

INTERNATIONAL ODE.

OUR FATHERS' LAND.

GOD bless our Fathers' Land!
Keep her in heart and hand
One with our own!

From all her foes defend,
Be her brave Peoples' Friend,
On all her realms descend,
Protect her Throne !

Father, with loving care
Guard Thou her kingdom's Heir,
Guide all his ways :
Thine arm his shelter be,
From him by land and sea
Bid storm and danger flee,
Prolong his days !

Lord, let War's tempest cease,
Fold the whole Earth in peace
Under thy wings !
Make all thy nations one,
All hearts beneath the sun,
Till Thou shalt reign alone,
Great King of kings !

VIVE LA FRANCE.

A SENTIMENT OFFERED AT THE DINNER TO H.I.H. THE PRINCE NAPOLEON, AT THE REVERE HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 25, 1861.

THE land of sunshine and of song !
Her name your hearts divine ;
To her the banquet's vows belong
Whose breasts have poured its wine ;

Our trusty friend, our true ally
  Through varied change and chance :
So, fill your flashing goblets high,—
  I give you VIVE LA FRANCE !

Above our hosts in triple folds
  The selfsame colours spread,
Where valour's faithful arm upholds
  The blue, the white, the red ;
Alike each nation's glittering crest
  Reflects the morning's glance,—
Twin eagles, soaring east and west :
  Once more, then, VIVE LA FRANCE !

Sister in trial ! who shall count
  Thy generous friendship's claim,
Whose blood ran mingling in the fount
  That gave our land its name,
Till Yorktown saw in blended line
  Our conquering arms advance,
And victory's double garlands twine
  Our banners? VIVE LA FRANCE !

O land of heroes ! in our need
  One gift from heaven we crave
To stanch these wounds that vainly bleed,—
  The wise to lead the brave !

Call back one Captain of thy past
From glory's marble trance,
Whose name shall be a bugle-blast
To rouse us! VIVE LA FRANCE!

Pluck Condé's baton from the trench,
Wake up stout Charles Martel,
Or find some woman's hand to clench
The sword of La Pucelle!
Give us one hour of old Turenne,—
One lift of Bayard's lance,—
Nay, call Marengo's Chief again
To lead us! VIVE LA FRANCE!

Ah, hush! our welcome guest shall hear
But sounds of peace and joy;
No angry echo vex thine ear,
Fair daughter of Savoy!
Once more! the land of arms and arts,
Of glory, grace, romance;
Her love lies warm in all our hearts:
God bless her! VIVE LA FRANCE!

BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE.

SHE has gone,—she has left us in passion and pride,—
Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our side!

She has torn her own star from our firmament's glow,
And turned on her brother the face of a foe!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
We can never forget that our hearts have been one,—
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,
From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame!

You were always too ready to fire at a touch;
But we said, "She is hasty,—she does not mean much."
We have scowled when you uttered some turbulent threat;
But Friendship still whispered, "Forgive and forget!"

Has our love all died out? Have its altars grown cold?
Has the curse come at last which the fathers foretold?
Then Nature must teach us the strength of the chain
That her petulant children would sever in vain.

They may fight till the buzzards are gorged
with their spoil,
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in
the soil,
Till the wolves and the catamounts troop
from their caves,
And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of
the waves:

In vain is the strife! When its fury is past,
Their fortunes must flow in one channel at
last,
As the torrents that rush from the moun-
tains of snow
Roll mingled in peace through the valleys
below.

Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky:
Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts
the die!
Though darkened with sulphur, though
cloven with steel,
The blue arch will brighten, the waters will
heal!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
There are battles with Fate that can never
be won!

The star-flowering banner must never be furled,
For its blossoms of light are the hope of the world !

Go, then, our rash sister ! afar and aloof,
Run wild in the sunshine away from our roof ;
But when your heart aches and your feet have grown sore,
Remember the pathway that leads to our door !

March 25, 1861.

POEMS OF THE CLASS OF '29.

1851-1889.

BILL AND JOE.

COME, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

Your name may flaunt a titled trail
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail,
And mine as brief appendix wear
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare;
To-day, old friend, remember still
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You 've won the great world's envied prize,
And grand you look in people's eyes,
With H O N. and L L. D.
In big brave letters, fair to see,—
Your fist, old fellow! off they go!—
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You 've worn the judge's ermined robe ;
You 've taught your name to half the globe ;
You 've sung mankind a deathless strain ;
You 've made the dead past live again :
The world may call you what it will,
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say
"See those old buffers, bent and gray, —
They talk like fellows in their teens !
Mad, poor old boys ! That 's what it means,"—
And shake their heads ; they little know
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe !—

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,
While Joe sits smiling at his side ;
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes,—
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame ?
A fitful tongue of leaping fame ;
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust ;
A few swift years, and who can show
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe ?

The weary idol takes his stand,
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,
While gaping thousands come and go,--
How vain it seems, this empty show!
Till all at once his pulses thrill;—
'Tis poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
The names that pleased our mortal ears;
In some sweet lull of harp and song
For earth-born spirits none too long,
Just whispering of the world below
Where this was Bill and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here
No sounding name is half so dear;
When fades at length our lingering day,
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?
Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. *Hic jacet* Bill.

A SONG OF "TWENTY-NINE."

1851.

THE summer dawn is breaking
On Auburn's tangled bowers,
The golden light is waking
On Harvard's ancient towers;

The sun is in the sky
That must see us do or die,
Ere it shine on the line
Of the CLASS OF '29.

At last the day is ended,
The tutor screws no more,
By doubt and fear attended
Each hovers round the door,
Till the good old Præses cries,
While the tears stand in his eyes,
"You have passed, and are classed
With the BOYS OF '29."

Not long are they in making
The college halls their own,
Instead of standing shaking,
Too bashful to be known;
But they kick the seniors' shins
Ere the second week begins,
When they stray in the way
Of the BOYS OF '29.

If a jolly set is trolling
The last *Der Freischütz* airs,
Or a "cannon bullet" rolling
Comes bouncing down the stairs,

The tutors, looking out,
Sigh, "Alas! there is no doubt,
'Tis the noise of the Boys
Of the CLASS OF '29."

Four happy years together,
By storm and sunshine tried,
In changing wind and weather,
They rough it side by side,
Till they hear their Mother cry,
"You are fledged, and you must fly,'
And the bell tolls the knell
Of the days of '29.

Since then, in peace or trouble,
Full many a year has rolled,
And life has counted double
The days that then we told;
Yet we'll end as we've begun,
For, though scattered, we are one,
While each year sees us here,
Round the board of '29.

Though fate may throw between us
The mountains or the sea,
No time shall ever wean us,
No distance set us free;

But around the yearly board,
When the flaming pledge is poured,
It shall claim every name
On the roll of '29.

To yonder peaceful ocean
That glows with sunset fires,
Shall reach the warm emotion
This welcome day inspires,
Beyond the ridges cold
Where a brother toils for gold,
Till it shine through the mine
Round the BOY OF '29.

If one whom fate has broken
Shall lift a moistened eye,
We 'll say, before he 's spoken--
"Old Classmate, don't you cry!
Here, take the purse I hold,
There 's a tear upon the gold—
It was mine—it is thine—
A'n't we BOYS OF '29?"

As nearer still and nearer
The fatal stars appear,
The living shall be dearer
With each encircling year,

Till a few old men shall say,
"We remember 'tis the day—
Let it pass with a glass
For the CLASS OF '29."

As one by one is falling
Beneath the leaves or snows,
Each memory still recalling,
The broken ring shall close,
Till the nightwinds softly pass
O'er the green and growing grass,
Where it waves on the graves
Of the BOYS OF '29!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

1852.

WHERE, oh where are the visions of morning,
Fresh as the dews of our prime?
Gone, like tenants that quit without warning,
Down the back entry of time.

Where, oh where are life's lilies and roses,
Nursed in the golden dawn's smile?
Dead as the bulrushes round little Moses,
On the old banks of the Nile.

Where are the Marys, and Anns, and Elizas,
  Loving and lovely of yore?
Look in the columns of old Advertisers,—
  Married and dead by the score.

Where the gray colts and the ten-year-old fillies,
  Saturday's triumph and joy?
Gone, like our friend *πόδας ὠκὺς* Achilles,
  Homer's ferocious old boy.

Die-away dreams of ecstatic emotion,
  Hopes like young eagles at play,
Vows of unheard-of and endless devotion,
  How ye have faded away!

Yet, though the ebbing of Time's mighty river
  Leaves our young blossoms to die,
Let him roll smooth in his current for ever,
  Till the last pebble is dry.

AN IMPROMPTU.

Not Premeditated.

1853.

THE clock has struck noon; ere it thrice tell the hours
We shall meet round the table that blushes with flowers,

And I shall blush deeper with shame-driven
blood
That I came to the banquet and brought
not a bud.

Who cares that his verse is a beggar in art
If you see through its rags the full throb of
his heart?
Who asks if his comrade is battered and
tanned,
When he feels his warm soul in the clasp of
his hand?

No! be it an epic, or be it a line,
The Boys will all love it, because it is mine;
I sung their last song on the morn of the day
That tore from their lives the last blossom
of May.

It is not the sunset that glows in the wine,
But the smile that beams over it makes it
divine;
I scatter these drops, and behold, as they
fall,
The day-star of memory shines through
them all!

And these are the last; they are drops that
I stole
From a wine-press that crushes the life from
the soul,

But they ran through my heart, and they sprang to my brain,
Till our twentieth sweet summer was smiling again!

THE OLD MAN DREAMS.

1854.

OH for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,
Than reign, a gray-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age!
Away with Learning's crown!
Tear out life's Wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track,
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

"Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I'll take—my—precious—wife!"

The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

"Why, yes"; for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
"I could not bear to leave them all—
I'll take—my—girl—and—boys."

The smiling angel dropped his pen,—
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed,—my laughter woke
The household with its noise,—
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the gray-haired boys.

REMEMBER—FORGET

1855.

AND what shall be the song to-night,
If song there needs must be?
If every year that brings us here
Must steal an hour from me?
Say, shall it ring a merry peal,
Or heave a mourning sigh
O'er shadows cast, by years long past,
On moments flitting by?

Nay, take the first unbidden line
The idle hour may send,
No studied grace can mend the face
That smiles as friend on friend;
The balsam oozes from the pine,
The sweetness from the rose,
And so, unsought, a kindly thought
Finds language as it flows.

The years rush by in sounding flight,
I hear their ceaseless wings;
Their songs I hear, some far, some near,
And thus the burden rings:

"The morn has fled, the noon has past,
The sun will soon be set,
The twilight fade to midnight shade;
Remember—and Forget!"

Remember all that time has brought—
The starry hope on high,
The strength attained, the courage gained,
The love that cannot die.
Forget the bitter, brooding thought,—
The word too harshly said,
The living blame love hates to name,
The frailties of the dead!

We have been younger, so they say,
But let the seasons roll,
He doth not lack an almanac
Whose youth is in his soul.
The snows may clog life's iron track,
But does the axle tire,
While bearing swift through bank and drift
The engine's heart of fire?

I lift a goblet in my hand;
If good old wine it hold,
An ancient skin to keep it in
Is just the thing, we're told.
We're grayer than the dusty flask,—
We're older than our wine;
Our corks reveal the "white top" seal,
The stamp of '29.

Ah, Boys! we clustered in the dawn,
To sever in the dark;
A merry crew, with loud halloo,
We climbed our painted bark;
We sailed her through the four years' cruise,
We'll sail her to the last,
Our dear old flag, though but a rag,
Still flying on her mast.

So gliding on, each winter's gale
Shall pipe us all on deck,
Till, faint and few, the gathering crew
Creep o'er the parting wreck,
Her sails and streamers spread aloft
To fortune's rain or shine,
Till storm or sun shall all be one,
And down goes TWENTY-NINE!

OUR INDIAN SUMMER.

1856.

YOU'LL believe me, dear boys, 'tis a pleasure to rise,
With a welcome like this in your darling old eyes;

To meet the same smiles and to hear the same tone
Which have greeted me oft in the years that have flown.

Were I gray as the grayest old rat in the wall,
My locks would turn brown at the sight of you all;
If my heart were as dry as the shell on the sand,
It would fill like the goblet I hold in my hand.

There are noontides of autumn when summer returns.
Though the leaves are all garnered and sealed in their urns,
And the bird on his perch, that was silent so long,
Believes the sweet sunshine and breaks into song.

We have caged the young birds of our beautiful June;
Their plumes are still bright and their voices in tune;

One moment of sunshine from faces like
these,
And they sing as they sung in the green-
growing trees.

The voices of morning ! how sweet is their
thrill
When the shadows have turned, and the
evening grows still !
The text of our lives may get wiser with
age,
But the print was so fair on its twentieth
page !

Look off from your goblet and up from your
plate,
Come, take the last journal, and glance at
its date :
Then think what we fellows should say and
should do,
If the 6 were a 9 and the 5 were a 2.

Ah, no ! for the shapes that would meet
with us here,
From the far land of shadows, are ever too
dear !

Though youth flung around us its pride and
its charms,
We should see but the comrades we clasped
in our arms.

A health to our future—a sigh for our past,
We love, we remember, we hope to the last ;
And for all the base lies that the almanacs
hold,
While we 've youth in our hearts we can
never grow old !

MARE RUBRUM.

1858.

FLASH out a stream of blood-red wine,
For I would drink to other days,
And brighter shall their memory shine,
Seen flaming through its crimson blaze !
The roses die, the summers fade,
But every ghost of boyhood's dream
By nature's magic power is laid
To sleep beneath this blood-red stream !

It filled the purple grapes that lay,
And drank the splendours of the sun,
Where the long summer's cloudless day
Is mirrored in the broad Garonne ;

It pictures still the bacchant shapes
  That saw their hoarded sunlight shed,—
The maidens dancing on the grapes,—
  Their milk-white ankles splashed with red.

Beneath these waves of crimson lie,
  In rosy fetters prisoned fast,
Those flitting shapes that never die,—
  The swift-winged visions of the past.
Kiss but the crystal's mystic rim,
  Each shadow rends its flowery chain,
Springs in a bubble from its brim,
  And walks the chambers of the brain.

Poor beauty ! Time and fortune's wrong
  No shape nor feature may withstand ;
Thy wrecks are scattered all along,
  Like emptied sea-shells on the sand ;
Yet, sprinkled with this blushing rain,
  The dust restores each blooming girl,
As if the sea-shells moved again
  Their glistening lips of pink and pearl.

Here lies the home of school-boy life,
  With creaking stair and wind-swept hall,
And, scarred by many a truant knife,
  Our old initials on the wall ;

Here rest, their keen vibrations mute,
The shout of voices known so well,
The ringing laugh, the wailing flute,
The chiding of the sharp-tongued bell.

Here, clad in burning robes, are laid
Life's blossomed joys, untimely shed.
And here those cherished forms have strayed
We miss awhile, and call them dead.
What wizard fills the wondrous glass?
What soil the enchanted clusters grew?
That buried passions wake and pass
In beaded drops of fiery dew?

Nay, take the cup of blood-red wine,—
Our hearts can boast a warmer glow,
Filled from a vintage more divine,
Calmed, but not chilled, by winter's snow!
To-night the palest wave we sip
Rich as the priceless draught shall be
That wet the bride of Cana's lip,—
The wedding wine of Galilee!

THE BOYS.

1859.

HAS there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.

Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We 're twenty to-night!

We 're twenty! We 're twenty! Who says we are more?
He 's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white* if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there 's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We 've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old:
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge";
It 's a neat little fiction,—of course it 's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker,"—the one on
the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you
to-night?
That's our "Member of Congress," we say
when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's his name?
—don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful
book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was
true!
So they chose him right in; a good joke it
was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-
decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical
chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled
fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he's
"The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent
pith,—
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him
Smith;

But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—
And I sometimes have asked,—shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

LINES.

1860.

I 'M ashamed,—that 's the fact.—it 's a pitiful case,—
Won't any kind classmate get up in my place?
Just remember how often I've risen before,—
I blush as I straighten my legs on the floor!

There are stories, once pleasing, too many times told,—
There are beauties once charming, too fearfully old,—
There are voices we 've heard till we know them so well,
Though they talked for an hour they 'd have nothing to tell.

Yet, Classmates! Friends! Brothers! Dear blessed old boys!
Made one by a lifetime of sorrows and joys,
What lips have such sounds as the poorest of these,
Though honeyed, like Plato's, by musical bees?

What voice is so sweet and what greeting so dear
As the simple, warm welcome that waits for us here?

The love of our boyhood still breathes in its tone,
And our hearts throb the answer, "He's one of our own!"

Nay! count not our numbers; some sixty we know,
But these are above, and those under the snow;
And thoughts are still mingled wherever we meet
For those we remember with those that we greet.

We have rolled on life's journey,—how fast and how far!
One round of humanity's many-wheeled car,
But up-hill and down-hill, through rattle and rub,
Old, true Twenty-niners! we've stuck to our hub!

While a brain lives to think or a bosom to feel,
We will cling to it still like the spokes of a wheel!
And age, as it chills us, shall fasten the tire
That youth fitted round in his circle of fire!

A VOICE OF THE LOYAL NORTH.

1861.

(JANUARY THIRD.)

WE sing "Our Country's" song to-night
With saddened voice and eye;
Her banner droops in clouded light
Beneath the wintry sky.
We 'll pledge her once in golden wine
Before her stars have set:
Though dim one reddening orb may shine,
We have a Country yet.

'Twere vain to sigh o'er errors past,
The fault of sires or sons;
Our soldier heard the threatening blast,
And spiked his useless guns;
He saw the star-wreathed ensign fall,
By mad invaders torn;
But saw it from the bastioned wall
That laughed their rage to scorn!

What though their angry cry is flung
Across the howling wave,—
They smite the air with idle tongue
The gathering storm who brave;

Enough of speech ! the trumpet rings ;
Be silent, patient, calm,—
God help them if the tempest swings
The pine against the palm !

Our toilsome years have made us tame ;
Our strength has slept unfelt ;
The furnace-fire is slow to flame
That bids our ploughshares melt ;
'Tis hard to lose the bread they win
In spite of Nature's frowns,—
To drop the iron threads we spin
That weave our web of towns,

To see the rusting turbines stand
Before the emptied flumes,
To fold the arms that flood the land
With rivers from their looms,—
But harder still for those who learn
The truth forgot so long ;
When once their slumbering passions burn,
The peaceful are the strong !

The Lord have mercy on the weak,
And calm their frenzied ire,
And save our brothers ere they shriek,
"We played with Northern fire ! "

The eagle hold his mountain height,—
  The tiger pace his den !
Give all their country, each his right !
  God keep us all ! Amen !

J. D. R.

1862.

THE friends that are, and friends that were,
  What shallow waves divide !
I miss the form for many a year
  Still seated at my side.

I miss him, yet I feel him still
  Amidst our faithful band,
As if not death itself could chill
  The warmth of friendship's hand.

His story other lips may tell,
  For me the veil is drawn ;
I only knew he loved me well,
  He loved me—and is gone !

VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP *UNION*.

1862.

'TIS midnight: through my troubled dream
Loud wails the tempest's cry;
Before the gale, with tattered sail,
A ship goes plunging by.
What name? Where bound?—The rocks around
Repeat the loud halloo.
—The good ship *Union*, Southward bound:
God help her and her crew!

And is the old flag flying still
That o'er your fathers flew,
With bands of white and rosy light,
And field of starry blue?
—Ay! look aloft! its folds full oft
Have braved the roaring blast,
And still shall fly when from the sky
This black typhoon has passed!

Speak, pilot of the storm-tost bark!
May I thy peril share?
—O landsman, there are fearful seas
The brave alone may dare!

-Nay, ruler of the rebel deep,
What matters wind or wave?
The rocks that wreck your reeling deck
Will leave me nought to save!

O landsman, art though false or true?
What sign hast thou to show?
—The crimson stains from loyal veins
That hold my heart-blood's flow!
—Enough! what more shall honour claim?
I know the sacred sign;
Above thy head our flag shall spread,
Our ocean path be thine!

The bark sails on; the Pilgrim's Cape
Lies low along her lee,
Whose headland crooks its anchor-flukes
To lock the shore and sea.
No treason here! it cost too dear
To win this barren realm!
And true and free the hands must be
That hold the whaler's helm!

Still on! Manhattan's narrowing bay
No rebel cruiser scars;
Her waters feel no pirate's keel
That flaunts the fallen stars!

—But watch the light on yonder height,—
Ay, pilot, have a care!
Some lingering cloud in mist may shroud
The capes of Delaware!

Say, pilot, what this fort may be,
Whose sentinels look down
From moated walls that show the sea
Their deep embrasures' frown?
The Rebel host claims all the coast,
But these are friends, we know,
Whose footprints spoil the "sacred soil,"
And this is?—Fort Monroe!

The breakers roar,—how bears the shore?
—The traitorous wreckers' hands
Have quenched the blaze that poured its rays
Along the Hatteras sands.
—Ha! say not so! I see its glow!
Again the shoals display
The beacon light that shines by night,
The Union Stars by day!

The good ship flies to milder skies,
The wave more gently flows,
The softening breeze wafts o'er the seas
The breath of Beaufort's rose.

What fold is this the sweet winds kiss,
Fair-striped and many-starred,
Whose shadow palls these orphaned walls
The twins of Beauregard?

What! heard you not port Royal's doom?
How the black war-ships came
And turned the Beaufort roses' bloom
To redder wreaths of flame?
How from Rebellion's broken reed
We saw his emblem fall,
As soon his cursèd poison weed
Shall drop from Sumter's wall?

On! on! Pulaski's iron hail
Falls harmless on Tybee!
The good ship feels the freshening gales,
She strikes the open sea;
She rounds the point, she threads the keys
That guard the Land of Flowers,
And rides at last where firm and fast
Her own Gibraltar towers!

The good ship *Union's* voyage is o'er,
At anchor safe she swings,
And loud and clear with cheer on cheer
Her joyous welcome rings:

Hurrah ! Hurrah ! it shakes the wave,
It thunders on the shore,—
One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,
One Nation, evermore !

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE."

1863.

YES, tyrants, you hate us, and fear while you hate
The self-ruling, chain-breaking, throne-shaking State !
The night-birds dread morning,—your instinct is true,—
The day-star of Freedom brings midnight for you !

Why plead with the deaf for the cause of mankind ?
The owl hoots at noon that the eagle is blind !
We ask not your reasons,—'twere wasting our time,—
Our life is a menace, our welfare a crime !

We have battles to fight, we have foes to subdue,—
Time waits not for us, and we wait not for you!
The mower mows on, though the adder may writhe
And the copper-head coil round the blade of his scythe!

"No sides in this quarrel," your statesmen may urge,
Of school-house and wages with slave-pen and scourge!—
No sides in the quarrel! proclaim it as well
To the angels that fight with the legions of hell!

They kneel in God's temple, the North and the South,
With blood on each weapon and prayers in each mouth.
Whose cry shall be answered? Ye Heavens, attend
The lords of the lash as their voices ascend!

"O Lord, we are shaped in the image of Thee,—
Smite down the base millions that claim to be free,

And lend thy strong arm to the soft-handed
race
Who eat *not* their bread in the sweat of
their face!"

So pleads the proud planter. What echoes
are these?
The bay of his bloodhound is borne on the
breeze,
And, lost in the shriek of his victim's
despair,
His voice dies unheard.—Hear the Puritan's
prayer!

"O Lord, that didst smother mankind in
thy flood,
The sun is as sackcloth, the moon is as blood,
The stars fall to earth as untimely are cast
The figs from the fig-tree that shakes in the
blast!

"All nations, all tribes in whose nostrils is
breath
Stand gazing at Sin as she travails with
Death!
Lord, strangle the monster that struggles to
birth,
Or mock us no more with thy 'Kingdom on
Earth!'

"If Ammon and Moab must reign in the land
Thou gavest Thine Israel, fresh from thy hand,
Call Baäl and Ashtaroth out of their graves
To be the new gods for the empire of slaves!"

Whose God will ye serve, O ye rulers of men?
Will ye build you new shrines in the slave-breeder's den?
Or bow with the children of light, as they call
On the Judge of the Earth and the Father of All?

Choose wisely, choose quickly, for time moves apace,—
Each day is an age in the life of our race!
Lord, lead them in love, ere they hasten in fear
From the fast-rising flood that shall girdle the sphere!

F. W. C.

1864.

FAST as the rolling seasons bring
The hour of fate to those we love,
Each pearl that leaves the broken string
Is set in Friendship's crown above.
As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain,
But those are stars that beam on high.

We miss—oh, how we miss!—*his* face,—
With trembling accents speak his name.
Earth cannot fill his shadowed place
From all her rolls of pride and fame;
Our song has lost the silvery thread
That carolled through his jocund lips;
Our laugh is mute, our smile is fled,
And all our sunshine in eclipse.

And what and whence the wondrous charm
That kept his manhood boylike still,—
That life's hard censors could disarm
And lead them captive at his will?
His heart was shaped of rosier clay,—
His veins were filled with ruddier fire,—
Time could not chill him, fortune sway,
Nor toil with all its burdens tire.

His speech burst throbbing from its front
And set our colder thoughts aglow,
As the hot leaping geysers mount
And falling melt the Iceland snow.
Some word, perchance, we counted rash,—
Some phrase our calmness might disclaim,
Yet 'twas the sunset's lightning's flash,
No angry bolt, but harmless flame.

Man judges all, God knoweth each;
We read the rule, He sees the law;
How oft His laughing children teach
The truths His prophets never saw!
O friend, whose wisdom flowered in mirth,
Our hearts are sad, our eyes are dim;
He gave thy smiles to brighten earth,—
We trust thy joyous soul to Him!

Alas!—our weakness Heaven forgive!
We murmur, even while we trust,
"How long earth's breathing burdens live,
Whose hearts, before they die, are dust!'
But thou!—through grief's untimely tears
We ask with half reproachful sigh—
"Couldst thou not watch a few brief years
Till Friendship faltered, 'Thou mayst die'?"

Who loved our boyish years so well?
Who knew so well their pleasant tales,
And all those livelier freaks could tell
Whose oft-told story never fails?
In vain we turn our aching eyes,—
In vain we stretch our eager hands,—
Cold in his wintry shroud he lies
Beneath the dreary drifting sands!

Ah, speak not thus! *He* lies not there!
We see him, hear him as of old!
He comes! He claims his wonted chair;
His beaming face we still behold!
His voice rings clear in all our songs,
And loud his mirthful accents rise;
To us our brother's life belongs,—
Dear friends, a classmate never dies!

THE LAST CHARGE.

1864.

NOW, men of the North! will you join in the strife
For country, for freedom, for honour, for life?
The giant grows blind in his fury and spite,—
One blow on his forehead will settle the fight!

Flash full in his eyes the blue lightning of steel,
And stun him with cannon-bolts, peal upon peal!
Mount, troopers, and follow your game to its lair,
As the hound tracks the wolf and the beagle the hare!

Blow, trumpets, your summons, till sluggards awake!
Beat, drums, till the roofs of the faint-hearted shake!
Yet, yet, ere the signet is stamped on the scroll,
Their names may be traced on the blood-sprinkled roll!

Trust not the false herald that painted your shield:
True honour *to-day* must be sought on the field!
Her scutcheon shows white with a blazon of red,—
The life-drops of crimson for liberty shed!

The hour is at hand, and the moment draws nigh;
The dog-star of treason grows dim in the sky;

Shine forth from the battle-cloud, light of the morn,
Call back the bright hour when the Nation was born !

The rivers of peace through our valleys shall run,
As the glaciers of tyranny melt in the sun ;
Smite, smite the proud parricide down from his throne,—
His sceptre once broken, the world is our own !

OUR OLDEST FRIEND.

1865.

I GIVE you the health of the oldest friend
That, short of eternity, earth can lend,—
A friend so faithful and tried and true
That nothing can wean him from me and you.

When first we screeched in the sudden blaze
Of the daylight's blinding and blasting rays,
And gulped at the gaseous, groggy air,
This old, old friend stood waiting there.

And when, with a kind of mortal strife,
We had gasped and choked into breathing life,
He watched by the cradle, day and night,
And held our hands till we stood upright.

From gristle and pulp our frames have grown
To stringy muscle and solid bone;
While we were changing, he altered not;
We might forget, but he never forgot.

He came with us to the college class,—
Little cared he for the steward's pass!
All the rest must pay their fee,
But the grim old deed-head entered free.

He stayed with us while we counted o'er
Four times each of the seasons four;
And with every season, from year to year,
The dear name Classmate he made more dear.

He never leaves us,—he never will,
Till our hands are cold and our hearts are still;
On birthdays, and Christmas, and New-Years too,
He always remembers both me and you.

Every year this faithful friend
His little present is sure to send ;
Every year, whereso'er we be,
He wants a keepsake from you and me.

How he loves us ! he pats our heads,
And, lo ! they are gleaming with silver
threads ;
And he 's always begging one lock of hair,
Till our shining crowns have nothing to
wear.

At length he will tell us, one by one,
" My child, your labour on earth is done ;
And now you must journey afar to see
My elder brother,—Eternity ! "

And so, when long, long years have passed,
Some dear old fellow will be the last,—
Never a boy alive but he
Of all our goodly company !

When he lies down, but not till then,
Our kind Class-angel will drop the pen
That writes in the day-book kept above
Our lifelong record of faith and love.

So here 's a health in homely rhyme
To our oldest classmate, Father Time !
May our last survivor live to be
As bald and as wise and as tough as he !

SHERMAN'S IN SAVANNAH.

A HALF-RHYMED IMPROMPTU.

1865.

LIKE the tribes of Israel,
Fed on quails and manna,
Sherman and his glorious band
Journeyed through the rebel land,
Fed from Heaven's all-bounteous hand,
Marching on Savannah!

As the moving pillar shone,
Streamed the starry banner
All day long in rosy light,
Flaming splendour all the night,
Till it swooped in eagle flight
Down on doomed Savannah!

Glory be to God on high!
Shout the loud Hosanna!
Treason's wilderness is past,
Canaan's shore is won at last,
Peal a nation's trumpet-blast,—
Sherman's in Savannah!

Soon shall Richmond's tough old hide
Find a tough old tanner!
Soon from every rebel wall
Shall the rag of treason fall,
Till our banner flaps o'er all
As it crowns Savannah!

MY ANNUAL.

1866.

HOW long will this harp which you once loved to hear
Cheat your lips of a smile or your eyes of a tear?
How long stir the echoes it wakened of old,
While its strings were unbroken, untarnished its gold?

Dear friends of my boyhood, my words do you wrong;
The heart, the heart only, shall throb in my song;
It reads the kind answer that looks from your eyes,—
"We will bid our old harper play on till he dies."

Though Youth, the fair angel that looked
o'er the strings,
Has lost the bright glory that gleamed on
his wings,
Though the freshness of morning has passed
from its tone,
It is still the old harp that was always your
own.

I claim not its music,—each note it affords
I strike from your heart-strings, that lend
me its chords;
I know you will listen and love to the last,
For it trembles and thrills with the voice of
your past.

Ah, brothers! dear brothers! the harp that
I hold
No craftsman could string and no artisan
mould;
He shaped it, He strung it, who fashioned
the lyres
That ring with the hymns of the seraphim
choirs.

Not mine are the visions of beauty it brings,
Not mine the faint fragrance around it that
clings;

Those shapes are the phantoms of years
that are fled,
Those sweets breathe from roses your
summers have shed.

Each hour of the past lends its tribute to
this,
Till it blooms like a bower in the Garden
of Bliss;
The thorn and the thistle may grow as they
will,
Where Friendship unfolds there is Paradise
still.

The bird wanders careless while summer is
green,
The leaf-hidden cradle that rocked him
unseen;
When Autumn's rude fingers the woods
have undressed,
The boughs may look bare, but they show
him his nest.

Too precious these moments! the lustre
they fling
Is the light of our year, is the gem of its
ring,

So brimming with sunshine, we almost forget
The rays it has lost, and its border of jet.

While round us the many-hued halo is shed,
How dear are the living, how near are the dead!
One circle, scarce broken, these waiting below,
Those walking the shores where the asphodels blow!

Not life shall enlarge it nor death shall divide,—
No brother new-born finds his place at my side;
No titles shall freeze us, no grandeurs infest,
His Honour, His Worship, are boys like the rest.

Some won the world's homage, their names we hold dear,—
But Friendship, not Fame, is the countersign here;
Make room by the conqueror crowned in the strife
For the comrade that limps from the battle of life!

What tongue talks of battle? Too long we
have heard
In sorrow, in anguish, that terrible word;
It reddened the sunshine, it crimsoned the
wave,
It sprinkled our doors with the blood of
our brave.

Peace, Peace comes at last, with her garland
of white;
Peace broods in all hearts as we gather to-
night;
The blazon of Union spreads full in the sun;
We echo its words,—We are one! We are
one!

ALL HERE.

1867.

IT is not what we say or sing,
That keeps our charm so long unbroken,
Though every lightest leaf we bring
May touch the heart as friendship's token;
Not what we sing or what we say
Can make us dearer to each other;
We love the singer and his lay,
But love as well the silent brother.

Who that has known the passion and the pain,
The rush through heart and brain,
The joy so like a pang his hand is pressed
Hard on his throbbing breast,
When thou, whose smile is life and bliss and fame,
Hast set his pulse aflame,
Muse of the lyre! can say farewell to thee?
Alas! and must it be?

In many a clime, in many a stately tongue,
The mighty bards have sung;
To these the immemorial thrones belong
And purple robes of song;
Yet the slight minstrel loves the slender tone
His lips may call his own,
And finds the measure of the verse more sweet,
Timed by his pulse's beat,
Than all the hymnings of the laurelled throng.
Say not I do him wrong,
For Nature spoils her warblers,—them she feeds
In lotus-growing meads
And pours them subtle draughts from haunted streams
That fill their souls with dreams.

Full well I know the gracious mother's wiles
And dear delusive smiles !
No callow fledgling of her singing brood
But tastes that witching food,
And hearing overhead the eagle's wing,
And how the thrushes sing,
Vents his exiguous chirp, and from his nest
Flaps forth—we know the rest.
I own the weakness of the tuneful kind,—
Are not all harpers blind ?
I sang too early, must I sing too late ?
The lengthening shadows wait
The first pale stars of twilight,—yet how sweet
The flattering whispers cheat,—
"Thou hast the fire no evening chill can tame,
Whose coals outlast its flame !"

Farewell, ye carols of the laughing morn,
Of earliest sunshine born !
The sower flings the seed and looks not back
Along his furrowed track ;
The reaper leaves the stalks for other hands
To gird with circling bands ;
The wind, earth's careless servant, truant-born,
Blows clean the beaten corn

And quits the thresher's floor, and goes his way
To sport with ocean's spray;
The headlong-stumbling rivulet scrambling down
To wash the sea-girt town,
Still babbling of the green and billowy waste
Whose salt he longs to taste,
Ere his warm wave its chilling clasp may feel
Has twirled the miller's wheel.

The song has done its task that makes us bold
With secrets else untold,—
And mine has run its errand; through the dews
I tracked the flying muse;
The daughter of the morning touched my lips
With roseate finger-tips;
Whether I would or would not, I must sing
With the new choirs of spring;
Now, as I watch the fading autumn day
And trill my softened lay,
I think of all that listened, and of one
For whom a brighter sun
Dawned at high summer's noon. Ah, comrades dear,
Are not all gathered here?

Our hearts have answered.—Yes! they hear
our call:
All gathered here! all! all!

THE SMILING LISTENER.

1871.

PRECISELY. I see it. You all want to
say
That a tear is too sad and a laugh is too
gay;
You could stand a faint smile, you could
manage a sigh,
But you value your ribs, and you don't want
to cry.

And why at our feast of the clasping of
hands
Need we turn on the stream of our lachry-
mal glands?
Though we see the white breakers of age on
our bow,
Let us take a good pull in the jolly-boat now!

It's hard if a fellow cannot feel content
When a banquet like this doesn't cost him
a cent,

When his goblet and plate he may empty at will,
And our kind Class Committee will settle the bill.

And here's your old friend, the identical bard
Who has rhymed and recited you verse by the yard
Since the days of the empire of Andrew the First
Till you're full to the brim and feel ready to burst.

It's awful to think of,—how year after year
With his piece in his pocket he waits for you here;
No matter who's missing, there always is one
To lug out his manuscript, sure as a gun.

"Why won't he stop writing?" Humanity cries:
The answer is briefly, "He can't if he tries;
He has played with his foolish old feather so long,
That the goose-quill in spite of him cackles in song."

You have watched him with patience from
morning to dusk
Since the tassel was bright o'er the green of
the husk,
And now—it 's too bad—it 's a pitiful job—
He has shelled the ripe ear till he 's come to
the cob.

I see one face beaming—it listens so well
There must be some music yet left in my
shell—
The wine of my soul is not thick on the lees;
One string is unbroken, one friend I can
please!

Dear comrade, the sunshine of seasons
gone by
Looks out from your tender and tear-
moistened eye,
A pharos of love on an ice-girdled coast,—
Kind soul!—Don't you hear me?—He 's deaf
as a post!

Can it be one of Nature's benevolent tricks
That you grow hard of hearing as I grow
prolix?
And that look of delight which would angels
beguile
Is the deaf man's prolonged unintelligent
smile?

Ah! the ear may grow dull, and the eye may wax dim,
But they still know a classmate—they can't mistake him;
There is something to tell us, "That's one of our band,"
Though we groped in the dark for a touch of his hand.

Well, Time with his snuffers is prowling about
And his shaky old fingers will soon snuff us out;
There's a hint for us all in each pendulum tick,
For we're low in the tallow and long in the wick.

You remember Rossini—you've been at the play?
How his overture-endings keep crashing away
Till you think, "It's all over—it can't but stop now—
That's the screech and the bang of the final bow-wow."

And you find you're mistaken; there's lots more to come,
More banging, more screeching of fiddle and drum,

Till when the last ending is finished and done,
You feel like a horse when the winning-post's won.

So I, who have sung to you, merry or sad,
Since the days when they called me a promising lad,
Though I've made you more rhymes than a tutor could scan,
Have a few more still left, like the razor-strop man.

Now pray don't be frightened—I'm ready to stop
My galloping anapæsts' clatter and pop—
In fact, if you say so, retire from to-day
To the garret I left, on a poet's half-pay.

And yet—I can't help it—perhaps—who can tell?
You might miss the poor singer you treated so well,
And confess you could stand him five minutes or so,
"It was so like old times we remember, you know."

'Tis not that the music can signify much,
But then there are chords that awake with a touch,—
And our hearts can find echoes of sorrow and joy
To the winch of the minstrel who hails from Savoy.

So this hand-organ tune that I cheerfully grind
May bring the old places and faces to mind,
And seen in the light of the past we recall
The flowers that have faded bloom fairest of all!

OUR SWEET SINGER.

J. A.

1872.

ONE memory trembles on our lips;
It throbs in every breast;
In tear-dimmed eyes, in mirth's eclipse,
The shadow stands confessed.

O silent voice, that cheered so long
Our manhood's marching day,
Without thy breath of heavenly song,
How weary seems the way!

Vain every pictured phrase to tell
  Our sorrowing heart's desire,—
The shattered harp, the broken shell,
  The silent unstrung lyre ;

For youth was round us while he sang ;
  It glowed in every tone ;
With bridal chimes the echoes rang,
  And made the past our own.

Oh blissful dream ! Our nursery joys
  We know must have an end,
But love and friendship's broken toys
  May God's good angels mend !

The cheering smile, the voice of mirth
  And laughter's gay surprise
That please the children born of earth,
  Why deem that Heaven denies ?

Methinks in that refulgent sphere
  That knows not sun or moon,
An earth-born saint might long to hear
  One verse of "Bonny Doon" ;

Or walking through the streets of gold
  In heaven's unclouded light,
His lips recall the song of old
  And hum "The sky is bright."

And can we smile when thou art dead?
Ah, brothers, even so!
The rose of summer will be red,
In spite of winter's snow.

Thou wouldst not leave us all in gloom
Because thy song is still,
Nor blight the banquet-garland's bloom
With grief's untimely chill.

The sighing wintry winds complain,—
The singing bird has flown,—
Hark! heard I not that ringing strain,
That clear celestial tone?

How poor these pallid phrases seem,
How weak this tinkling line,
As warbles through my waking dream
That angel voice of thine!

Thy requiem asks a sweeter lay;
It falters on my tongue;
For all we vainly strive to say,
Thou shouldst thyself have sung!

H. C. M. H. S. J. K. W.

1873.

THE dirge is played, the throbbing death-peal rung,
The sad-voiced requiem sung;
On each white urn where memory dwells
The wreath of rustling immortelles
Our loving hands have hung,
And balmiest leaves have strown and tenderest blossoms flung.

The birds that filled the air with songs have flown,
The wintry blasts have blown,
And these for whom the voice of spring
Bade the sweet choirs their carols sing
Sleep in those chambers lone
Where snows untrodden lie, unheard the night-winds moan.

We clasp them all in memory, as the vine
Whose running stems intwine
The marble shaft, and steal around
The lowly stone, the nameless mound;
With sorrowing hearts resign
Our brothers true and tried, and close our broken line.

How fast the lamps of life grow dim and die
Beneath our sunset sky!
Still fading, as along our track
We cast our saddened glances back,
And while we vainly sigh
The shadowy day recedes, the starry night draws nigh.

As when from pier to pier across the tide
With even keel we glide,
The lights we left along the shore
Grow less and less, while more, yet more
New vistas open wide
Of fair illumined streets and casements golden-eyed.

Each closing circle of our sunlit sphere
Seems to bring heaven more near:
Can we not dream that those we love
Are listening in the world above
And smiling as they hear
The voices known so well of friends that still are dear?

Does all that made us human fade away
With this dissolving clay?
Nay, rather deem the blessed isles
Are bright and gay with joyous smiles,

That angels have their play,
And saints that tire of song may claim their holiday.

All else of earth may perish ; love alone
Not heaven shall find outgrown !
Are they not here, our spirit guests,
With love still throbbing in their breasts ?
Once more let flowers be strown.
Welcome, ye shadowy forms, we count you still our own !

WHAT I HAVE COME FOR.

1873.

I HAVE come with my verses—I think I may claim
It is not the first time I have tried on the same.
They were puckered in rhyme, they were wrinkled in wit ;
But your hearts were so large that they made them a fit.

I have come—not to tease you with more of my rhyme,
But to feel as I did in the blessed old time ;

I want to hear him with the Brobdingnag
laugh—
We count him at least as three men and a
half.

I have come to meet judges so wise and so
grand
That I shake in my shoes while they're
shaking my hand;
And the prince among merchants who put
back the crown
When they tried to enthrone him the King
of the Town.

I have come to see George—Yes, I think
there are four,
If they all were like these I could wish there
were more.
I have come to see one whom we used to
call "Jim,"
I want to see—oh, don't I want to see him?

I have come to grow young—on my word I
declare
I have thought I detected a change in my
hair!
One hour with "The Boys" will restore it
to brown—
And a wrinkle or two I expect to rub down.

Yes, that 's what I 've come for, as all of us
come ;
When I meet the dear Boys I could wish I
were dumb.
You asked me, you know, but it 's spoiling
the fun ;
I have told what I came for ; my ditty is
done.

OUR BANKER.

1874.

OLD TIME, in whose bank we deposit our
notes,
Is a miser who always wants guineas for
groats ;
He keeps all his customers still in arrears
By lending them minutes and charging them
years.

The twelvemonth rolls round and we never
forget
On the counter before us to pay him our
debt.
We reckon the marks he has chalked on the
door,
Pay up and shake hands and begin a new
score.

Yet bring whate'er your garden grows,
  Thrice welcome to our smiles and praises;
Thanks for the myrtle and the rose,
  Thanks for the marigolds and daisies;
One flower erelong we all shall claim,
  Alas! unloved of Amaryllis—
Nature's last blossom—need I name
  The wreath of threescore's silver lilies?

How many, brothers, meet to-night
  Around our boyhood's covered embers?
Go read the treasured names aright
  The old triennial list remembers;
Though twenty wear the starry sign
  That tells a life has broke its tether,
The fifty-eight of 'twenty-nine—
  God bless THE BOYS!—are all together!

These come with joyous look and word,
  With friendly grasp and cheerful greeting,—
Those smile unseen, and move unheard,
  The angel guests of every meeting;
They cast no shadow in the flame
  That flushes from the gilded lustre,
But count us—we are still the same;
  One earthly band, one heavenly cluster!

Love dies not when he bows his head
To pass beyond the narrow portals,—
The light these glowing moments shed
Wakes from their sleep our lost immortals;
They come as in their joyous prime,
Before their morning days were numbered,—
Death stays the envious hand of Time,—
The eyes have not grown dim that slumbered!

The paths that loving souls have trod
Arch o'er the dust where worldlings grovel
High as the zenith o'er the sod,—
The cross above the sexton's shovel!
We rise beyond the realms of day;
They seem to stoop from spheres of glory
With us one happy hour to stray,
While youth comes back in song and story.

Ah! ours is friendship true as steel
That war has tried in edge and temper;
It writes upon its sacred seal
The priest's *ubique—omnes—semper!*

It lends the sky a fairer sun
That cheers our lives with rays as steady
As if our footsteps had begun
To print the golden streets already!

The tangling years have clinched its knot
Too fast for mortal strength to sunder;
The lightning bolts of noon are shot;
No fear of evening's idle thunder!
Too late! too late!—no graceless hand
Shall stretch its cords in vain endeavour
To rive the close encircling band
That made and keeps us one forever!

So when upon the fated scroll
The falling stars have all descended,
And, blotted from the breathing roll,
Our little page of life is ended,
We ask but one memorial line
Traced on thy tablet, Gracious Mother:
"My children. Boys of '29
In pace. How they loved each other!"

ONCE MORE.

1868.

"*WILL I come?*" That *is* pleasant! I beg to inquire
If the gun that I carry has ever missed fire?

And which was the muster-roll—mention
but one—
That missed your old comrade who carries
the gun?

You see me as always, my hand on the lock,
The cap on the nipple, the hammer full
cock;
It is rusty, some tell me; I heed not the
scoff;
It is battered and bruised, but it always
goes off!

"Is it loaded?" I'll bet you! What
doesn't it hold?
Rammed full to the muzzle with memories
untold;
Why, it scares me to fire, lest the pieces
should fly
Like the cannons that burst on the Fourth
of July!

One charge is a remnant of College-day
dreams
(Its wadding is made of forensics and
themes);
Ah, visions of fame! what a flash in the pan
As the trigger was pulled by each clever
young man!

And love! Bless my stars, what a cartridge
is there!
With a wadding of rose-leaves and ribbons
and hair,—
All crammed in one verse to go off at a shot!
"Were there ever such sweethearts?" Of
course there were not!

And next,—what a load! it will split the
old gun,—
Three fingers,—four fingers,—five fingers of
fun!
Come tell me, gray sages, for mischief and
noise
Was there ever a lot like us fellows, "The
Boys"?

Bump! bump! down the staircase the
cannon-ball goes,—
Aha, old Professor! Look out for your
toes!
Don't think, my poor Tutor, to *sleep* in your
bed,—
Two "Boys"—'twenty-niners—room over
your head!

Remember the nights when the tar-barrel
blazed!
From red "Massachusetts" the war-cry was
raised;

And "Hollis" and "Stoughton" reëchoed
the call;
Till P——— poked his head out of Hol-
worthy Hall!

Old P———, as we called him,—at fifty or
so,—
Not exactly a bud, but not quite in full
blow;
In ripening manhood, suppose we should
say,
Just nearing his prime, as we boys are to-
day!

Oh say, can you look through the vista of
age
To the time when old Morse drove the
regular stage?
When Lyon told tales of the long-vanished
years,
And Lenox crept round with the rings in
his ears?

And dost thou, my brother, remember
indeed
The days of our dealings with Willard and
Read?

When "Dolly" was kicking and running
away,
And punch came up smoking on Fillebrown's
tray?

But where are the Tutors, my brother, oh
tell!—
And where the Professors, remembered so
well?
The sturdy old Grecian of Holworthy Hall,
And Latin, and Logic, and Hebrew, and all?

"They are dead, the old fellows" (we called
them so then,
Though we since have found out they were
lusty young men).
They are *dead*, do you tell me?—but how
do you know?
You've filled once too often. I doubt if it's
so.

I'm thinking. I'm thinking. Is this
'sixty-eight?
It's not quite so clear. It admits of debate.
I *may* have been dreaming. I rather incline
To think—yes, I'm certain—it is 'twenty-
nine!

"By Zhorzhe!"—as friend Sales is accustomed to cry,—
You tell me they're dead, but I know it's a lie!
Is Jackson not President?—What was't you said?
It can't be; you're joking; what,—all of 'em dead?

Jim,—Harry,—Fred,—Isaac,—all gone from our side?
They couldn't have left us,—no, not if they tried.
Look,—there's our old Præses,—he can't find his text;
See,—P——— rubs his leg, as he growls out "*The next!*"

I told you't was nonsense. Joe, give us a song!
Go harness up "Dolly," and fetch her along!—
Dead! Dead! You false graybeard, I swear they are not!
Hurrah for Old Hickory!—Oh, I forgot!

Well, *one* we have with us (how could he contrive
To deal with us youngsters and still to survive?)

Who wore for our guidance authority's
robe,—
No wonder he took to the study of Job !
And now, as my load was uncommonly large,
Let me taper it off with a classical charge ;
When that has gone off, I shall drop my old
gun—
And then stand at ease, for my service is
done.

Bibamus ad Classem vocatam "The Boys"
Et eorum Tutorem cui nomen est "Noyes" ;
Et floreant, valeant, vigeant tam,
Non Peircius ipse enumeret quam !

THE OLD CRUISER.

1869.

HERE'S the old cruiser, 'Twenty-nine,
Forty times she 's crossed the line ;
Same old masts and sails and crew,
Tight and tough and as good as new.

Into the harbour she bravely steers
Just as she 's done for these forty years,—
Over her anchor goes, splash and clang !
Down her sails drop, rattle and bang !

Comes a vessel out of the dock
Fresh and spry as a fighting-cock,
Feathered with sails, and spurred with steam,
Heading out of the classic stream.

Crew of a hundred all aboard,
Every man as fine as a lord.
Gay they look and proud they feel,
Bowling along on even keel.

On they float with wind and tide,—
Gain at last the old ship's side;
Every man looks down in turn,—
Reads the name that 's on her stern.

"'Twenty-nine!—*Diable* you say!
That was in Skipper Kirkland's day!
What was the Flying Dutchman's name?
This old rover must be the same.

"Ho! you Boatswain that walks the deck,
How does it happen you 're not a wreck?
One and another have come to grief,
How have you dodged by rock and reef?"

Boatswain, lifting one knowing lid,
Hitches his breeches and shifts his quid:

"Hey? What is it? Who 's come to grief?
Louder, young swab, I 'm a little deaf."

"I say, old fellow, what keeps your boat
With all you jolly old boys afloat,
When scores of vessels as good as she
Have swallowed the salt of the bitter sea?

"Many a crew from many a craft
Goes drifting by on a broken raft
Pieced from a vessel that clove the brine
Taller and prouder than 'Twenty-nine.

"Some capsized in an angry breeze,
Some were lost in the narrow seas,
Some on snags and some on sands
Struck and perished and lost their hands.

"Tell us young ones, you gray old man,
What is your secret, if you can.
We have a ship as good as you,
Show us how to keep our crew."

So in his ear the youngster cries;
Then the gray Boatswain straight replies:—
"All your crew be sure you know,—
Never let one of your shipmates go.

"If he leaves you, change your tack,
Follow him close and fetch him back;

When you 've hauled him in at last
Grapple his flipper and hold him fast.

"If you 've wronged him, speak him fair,
Say you 're sorry and make it square ;
If he 's wronged you, wink so tight
None of you see what 's plain in sight.

"When the world goes hard and wrong,
Lend a hand to help him along ;
When his stockings have holes to darn,
Don't you grudge him your ball of yarn.

"Once in a twelvemonth, come what may
Anchor your ship in a quiet bay,
Call all hands and read the log,
And give 'em a taste of grub and grog.

"Stick to each other through thick and thin;
All the closer as age leaks in ;
Squalls will blow and clouds will frown,
But stay by your ship till you all go down !"

ADDED FOR THE ALUMNI MEETING, JUNE 29, 1869.

So the gray Boatswain of 'Twenty-nine
Piped to "The Boys" as they crossed the line ;

Round the cabin sat thirty guests,
Babes of the nurse with a thousand breasts.

There were the judges, grave and grand,
Flanked by the priests on either hand ;
There was the lord of wealth untold,
And the dear good fellow in broadcloth old.

Thirty men, from twenty towns,
Sires and grandsires with silvered crowns,—
Thirty school-boys all in a row,—
Bens and Georges and Bill and Joe.

In thirty goblets the wine was poured,
But threescore gathered around the board, —
For lo ! at the side of every chair
A shadow hovered—we all were there !

HYMN FOR THE CLASS-MEETING

1869.

THOU Gracious Power, whose mercy lends
The light of home, the smile of friends,
Our gathered flock thine arms infold
As in the peaceful days of old.

Wilt thou not hear us while we raise,
In sweet accord of solemn praise,

The voices that have mingled long
In joyous flow of mirth and song?

For all the blessings life has brought,
For all its sorrowing hours have taught,
For all we mourn, for all we keep,
The hands we clasp, the loved that sleep;

The noontide sunshine of the past,
These brief, bright moments fading fast,
The stars that gild our darkening years,
The twilight ray from holier spheres;

We thank thee, Father! let thy grace
Our narrowing circle still embrace,
Thy mercy shed its heavenly store,
Thy peace be with us evermore!

EVEN SONG.

1870.

IT may be, yes, it must be, Time that brings
An end to mortal things,
That sends the beggar Winter in the train
Of Autumn's burdened wain,—
Time, that is heir of all our earthly state,
And knoweth well to wait

Till sea hath turned to shore and shore to sea,
If so it need must be,
Ere he made good his claim and call his own
Old empires overthrown,—
Time, who can find no heavenly orb too large
To hold its fee in charge,
Nor any motes that fill its beam so small,
But he shall care for all,—
It may be, must be,—yes, he soon shall tire
This hand that holds the lyre.

Then ye who listened in that earlier day
When to my careless lay
I matched its chords and stole their first-born thrill,
With untaught rudest skill
Vexing a treble from the slender strings
Thin as the locust sings
When the shrill-crying child of summer's heat
Pipes from its leafy seat,
The dim pavilion of embowering green
Beneath whose shadowy screen
The small sopranist tries his single note
Against the song-bird's throat,
And all the echoes listen, but in vain;
They hear no answering strain,—
Then ye who listened in that earlier day
Shall sadly turn away,

Saying, "The fire burns low, the hearth is cold
That warmed our blood of old;
Cover its embers and its half-burnt brands,
And let us stretch our hands
Over a brighter and fresh-kindled flame;
Lo, this is not the same,
The joyous singer of our morning time,
Flushed high with lusty rhyme!
Speak kindly, for he bears a human heart,
But whisper him apart,—
Tell him the woods their autumn robes have shed
And all their birds have fled,
And shouting winds unbuild the naked nests
They warmed with patient breasts;
Tell him the sky is dark, the summer o'er,
And bid him sing no more!"

Ah, welladay! if words so cruel-kind
A listening ear might find!
But who that hears the music in his soul
Of rhythmic waves that roll
Crested with gleams of fire, and as they flow
Stir all the deeps below
Till the great pearls no calm might ever reach
Leap glistening on the beach,—

How long he will lend us, how much we
may owe,
No angel will tell us, no mortal may know.
At fivescore, at fourscore, at threescore and
ten,
He may close the account with a stroke of
his pen.

This only we know,—amid sorrows and joys
Old Time has been easy and kind with "The
Boys."
Though he must have and will have and
does have his pay,
We have found him good-natured enough in
his way.

He never forgets us, as others will do,—
I am sure he knows me, and I think he
knows you,
For I see on your foreheads a mark that he
lends
As a sign he remembers to visit his friends.

In the shape of a classmate (a wig on his
crown,—
His day-book and ledger laid carefully down)
He has welcomed us yearly, a glass in his
hand,
And pledged the good health of our brotherly
band.

He 's a thief, we must own, but how many there be
That rob us less gently and fairly than he :
He has stripped the green leaves that were over us all,
But they let in the sunshine as fast as they fall.

Young beauties may ravish the world with a glance
As they languish in song, as they float in the dance,—
They are grandmothers now we remember as girls,
And the comely white cap takes the place of the curls.

But the sighing and moaning and groaning are o'er,
We are pining and moping and sleepless no more,
And the hearts that were thumping like ships on the rocks
Beat as quiet and steady as meeting-house clocks.

The trump of ambition, loud sounding and shrill,
May blow its long blast, but the echoes are still,

The spring-tides are past, but no billow may
reach
The spoils they have landed far up on the
beach.

We see that Time robs us, we know that he
cheats,
But we still find a charm in his pleasant
deceits,
While he leaves the remembrance of all that
was best,
Love, friendship, and hope, and the promise
of rest.

Sweet shadows of twilight! how calm their
repose,
While the dewdrops fall soft in the breast
of the rose!
How blest to the toiler his hour of release
When the vesper is heard with its whisper
of peace!

Then here's to the wrinkled old miser, our
friend;
May he send us his bills to the century's
end,
And lend us the moments no sorrow alloys,
Till he squares his account with the last of
"The Boys."

FOR CLASS MEETING.

1875.

IT is a pity and a shame—alas! alas! I know it is,
To tread the trodden grapes again, but so it has been, so it is;
The purple vintage long is past, with ripened clusters bursting so
They filled the wine-vats to the brim,—'tis strange you will be thirsting so!

Too well our faithful memory tells what might be rhymed or sung about,
For all have sighed and some have wept since last year's snows were flung about;
The beacon flame that fired the sky, the modest ray that gladdened us,
A little breath has quenched their light, and deepening shades have saddened us.

No more our brother's life is ours for cheering or for grieving us,
One only sadness they bequeathed, the sorrow of their leaving us;

Farewell ! Farewell !—I turn the leaf I read
my chiming measure in ;
Who knows but something still is there a
friend may find a pleasure in ?

For who can tell by what he likes what
other people's fancies are ?
How all men think the best of wives their
own particular Nancies are ?
If what I sing you brings a smile, you will
not stop to catechise,
Nor read Bœotia's lumbering line with nicely
scanning Attic eyes.

Perhaps the alabaster box that Mary broke
so lovingly,
While Judas looked so sternly on, the
Master so approvingly,
Was not so fairly wrought as those that
Pilate's wife and daughters had,
Or many a dame of Judah's line that drank
of Jordan's waters had.

Perhaps the balm that cost so dear, as some
remarked officiously,
The precious nard that filled the room with
fragrance so deliciously,

So oft recalled in storied page and sung in
verse melodious,
The dancing girl had thought too cheap,—
that daughter of Herodias.

Where now are all the mighty deeds that
Herod boasted loudest of?
Where now the flashing jewelry the te-
trarch's wife was proudest of?
Yet still to hear how Mary loved, all tribes
of men are listening,
And still the sinful woman's tears like stars
in heaven are glistening.

'Tis not the gift our hands have brought,
the love it is we bring with it,—
The minstrel's lips may shape the song, his
heart in tune must sing with it;
And so we love the simple lays, and wish
we might have more of them,
Our poet brothers sing for us,—there must
be half a score of them.

It may be that of fame and name our voices
once were emulous,—
With deeper thoughts, with tenderer throbs
their softening tones are tremulous;

The dead seem listening as of old, ere
friendship was bereft of them ;
The living wear a kinder smile, the rem-
nant that is left of them.

Though on the once unfurrowed brows the
harrow teeth of Time may show,
Though all the strain of crippling years the
halting feet of rhyme may show,
We look and hear with melting hearts, for
what we all remember is
The morn of Spring, nor heed how chill the
sky of gray November is.

Thanks to the gracious powers above from
all mankind that singled us,
And dropped the pearl of friendship in the
cup they kindly mingled us,
And bound us in a wreath of flowers with
hoops of steel knit under it ;—
Nor time, nor space, nor chance, nor change,
nor death himself shall sunder it !

"AD AMICOS.

1876.

"Dumque virent genua
Et decet, obducta solvatur fonte senectus."

THE muse of boyhood's fervid hour
Grows tame as skies get chill and hazy;
Where once she sought a passion-flower,
She only hopes to find a daisy.
Well, who the changing world bewails?
Who asks to have it stay unaltered?
Shall grown-up kittens chase their tails?
Shall colts be never shod or haltered?

Are we "The Boys" that used to make
The tables ring with noisy follies?
Whose deep-lunged laughter oft would shake
The ceiling with its thunder-volleys?
Are we the youths with lips unshorn,
At beauty's feet unwrinkled suitors,
Whose memories reach tradition's morn,—
The days of prehistoric tutors?

"The Boys" we knew,—but who are these
Whose heads might serve for Plutarch's sages,
Or Fox's martyrs, if you please,
Or hermits of the dismal ages?

"The Boys" we knew—can these be those?
Their cheeks with morning's blush were painted;—
Where are the Harrys, Jims, and Joes
With whom we once were well acquainted?

If we are they, we 're not the same;
If they are we, why then they 're masking;
Do tell us, neighbour What 's-your-name,
Who are you?—What 's the use of asking;
You once were George, or Bill, or Ben;
There 's you, yourself—there 's you, that other—
I know you now—I knew you then—
You used to be your younger brother!

You both are all our own to-day,—
But ah! I hear a warning whisper;
You roseate hour that flits away
Repeats the Roman's sad *paulisper.*
Come back! come back! we 've need of you
To pay you for your word of warning;
We 'll bathe your wings in brighter dew
Than ever wet the lids of morning!

Behold this cup; its mystic wine
No alien's lip has ever tasted;
The blood of friendship's clinging vine,
Still flowing, flowing, yet unwasted:

Old Time forgot his running sand
And laid his hour-glass down to fill it,
And Death himself with gentle hand
Has touched the chalice, not to spill it.

Each bubble rounding at the brim
Is rainbowed with its magic story;
The shining days with age grown dim
Are dressed again in robes of glory;
In all its freshness spring returns
With song of birds and blossoms tender;
Once more the torch of passion burns,
And youth is here in all its splendour!

Hope swings her anchor like a toy,
Love laughs and shows the silver arrow
We knew so well as man and boy,—
The shaft that stings through bone and marrow;
Again our kindling pulses beat,
With tangled curls our fingers dally,
And bygone beauties smile as sweet
As fresh-blown lilies of the valley.

O blessed hour! we may forget
Its wreaths, its rhymes, its songs, its laughter,
But not the loving eyes we met,
Whose light shall gild the dim hereafter.

How every heart to each grows warm!
  Is one in sunshine's ray? We share it.
Is one in sorrow's blinding storm?
  A look, a word, shall help him bear it.

"The Boys" we were, "The Boys" we 'll be
  As long as three, as two, are creeping;
Then here 's to him—ah! which is he?—
  Who lives till all the rest are sleeping;
A life with tranquil comfort blest,
  The young man's health, the rich man's plenty,
All earth can give that earth has best,
  And heaven at fourscore years and twenty.

HOW NOT TO SETTLE IT.

1877.

I LIKE at times to hear the steeples' chimes
  With sober thoughts impressively that mingle;
But sometimes, too, I rather like—don't you?—
  To hear the music of the sleigh bells' jingle.

I like full well the deep resounding swell
Of mighty symphonies with chords inwoven;
But sometimes, too, a song of Burns—don't you?
After a solemn storm-blast of Beethoven.

Good to the heels the well-worn slipper feels
When the tired player shuffles off the buskin;
A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin.

Some words I find,—say Watts upon the Mind,—
No matter though at first they seemed amusing,
Not quite the same, but just a little tame
After some five or six times' reperusing.

So, too, at times when melancholy rhymes
Or solemn speeches sober down a dinner,
I've seen it's true, quite often,—haven't you?—
The best-fed guests perceptibly grow thinner.

Better some jest (in proper terms expressed)
Or story (strictly moral) even if musty,
Or song we sung when these old throats were young,—
Something to keep our souls from getting rusty.

The poorest scrap from memory's ragged lap
Comes like an heirloom from a dear dead mother—
Hush! there's a tear that has no business here,
A half-formed sigh that ere its birth we smother.

We cry, we laugh; ah, life is half and half,
Now bright and joyous as a song of Herrick's,
Then chill and bare as funeral-minded Blair;
As fickle as a female in hysterics.

If I could make you cry I wouldn't try;
If you have hidden smiles I'd like to find them,
And that although, as well I ought to know,
The lips of laughter have a skull behind them.

Yet when I think we may be on the brink
  Of having Freedom's banner to dispose of,
All crimson-hued, because the Nation would
  Insist on cutting its own precious nose off,

I feel indeed as if we rather need
  A sermon such as preachers tie a text on.
If Freedom dies because a ballot lies,
  She earns her grave; 'tis time to call the
    sexton!

But if a fight can make the matter right,
  Here are we, classmates, thirty men of
    mettle;
We're strong and tough, we've lived nigh
    long enough,—
  What if the Nation gave it us to settle?

The tale would read like that illustrious
    deed
  When Curtius took the leap the gap that
    filled in,
Thus: "Fivescore years, good friends, as it
    appears,
  At last this people split on Hayes and
    Tilden.

"One half cried, 'See! the choice is S. J. T.!'
And one half swore as stoutly it was t'other;
Both drew the knife to save the Nation's life
By wholesale vivisection of each other.

"Then rose in mass that monumental Class,—
'Hold! hold!' they cried, 'give us, give us the daggers!'
'Content! content!' exclaimed with one consent
The gaunt ex-rebels and the carpet-baggers.

"Fifteen each side, the combatants divide,
So nicely balanced are their predilections;
And first of all a tear-drop each lets fall,
A tribute to their obsolete affections.

"Man facing man, the sanguine strife began,
Jack, Jim and Joe against Tom, Dick, and Harry,
Each several pair its own account to square,
Till both were down or one stood solitary.

"And the great fight raged furious all the night
Till every integer was made a fraction;
Reader, wouldst know what history has to show
As net result of the above transaction?

"Whole coat-tails, four; stray fragments, several score;
A heap of spectacles; a deaf man's trumpet;
Six lawyers' briefs; seven pocket-handkerchiefs;
Twelve canes wherewith the owners used to stump it;

"Odd rubber-shoes; old gloves of different hues;
Tax-bills,—unpaid,—and several empty purses;
And, saved from harm by some protecting charm,
A printed page with Smith's immortal verses;

"Trifles that claim no very special name,—
Some useful, others chiefly ornamental;
Pins, buttons, rings, and other trivial things,
With various wrecks, capillary and dental.

"Also, one flag,—'t was nothing but a rag,
And what device it bore it little matters;
Red, white, and blue, but rent all through and through,
'Union for ever' torn to shreds and tatters.

"They fought so well not one was left to tell
Which got the largest share of cuts and slashes;
When heroes meet, both sides are bound to beat;
They telescoped like cars in railroad smashes.

"So the great split that baffled human wit
And might have cost the lives of twenty millions,
As all may see that know the rule of three,
Was settled just as well by these civilians.

"As well. Just so. Not worse, not better. No,
Next morning found the Nation still divided;
Since all were slain, the inference is plain,
They left the point they fought for undecided."

If not quite true, as I have told it you,—
  This tale of mutual extermination,
To minds perplexed with threats of what comes next,
  Perhaps may furnish food for contemplation.

To cut men's throats to help them count their votes
  Is asinine—nay, worse—ascidian folly;
Blindness like that would scare the mole and bat,
  And make the liveliest monkey melancholy.

I say once more, as I have said before,
  If voting for our Tildens and our Hayeses
Means only fight, then, Liberty, good-night!
  Pack up your ballot-box and go to blazes!

Unfurl your blood-red flags, you murderous hags,
  You *pétroleuses* of Paris, fierce and foamy;
We'll sell our stock in Plymouth's blasted rock,
  Pull up our stakes and migrate to Dahomey!

THE LAST SURVIVOR.

1878.

YES! the vacant chairs tell sadly we are going, going fast,
And the thought comes strangely o'er me, who will live to be the last?
When the twentieth century's sunbeams climb the far-off eastern hill,
With his ninety winters burdened, will he greet the morning still?

Will he stand with Harvard's nurslings when they hear their mother's call
And the old and young are gathered in the many-alcoved hall?
Will he answer to the summons when they range themselves in line
And the young moustachioed marshal calls out "Class of '29"?

Methinks I see the column as its lengthened ranks appear
In the sunshine of the morrow of the nineteen hundredth year;
Through the yard 'tis creeping, winding, by the walls of dusky red,—
What shape is that which totters at the long procession's head?

Who knows this ancient graduate of four-
score years and ten,—
What place he held, what name he bore
among the sons of men?
So speak the curious question; its answer
travels slow;
"'Tis the last of sixty classmates of seventy
years ago."

His figure shows but dimly, his face I
scarce can see,—
There's something that reminds me,—it
looks like—is it he?
He? Who? No voice may whisper what
wrinkled brow shall claim
The wreath of stars that circles our last sur-
vivor's name.

Will he be some veteran minstrel, left to
pipe in feeble rhyme
All the stories and the glories of our gay
and golden time?
Or some quiet, voiceless brother in whose
lonely, loving breast
Fond memory broods in silence, like a dove
upon her nest?

Will it be some old *Emeritus*, who taught
so long ago
The boys that heard him lecture have heads
as white as snow?

Or a pious, painful preacher, holding forth
from year to year
Till his colleague got a colleague whom the
young folks flocked to hear?

Will it be a rich old merchant in a square-
tied white cravat,
Or select-man of a village in a prehistoric
hat?
Will his dwelling be a mansion in a marble-
fronted row,
Or a homestead by a hillside where the
huckleberries grow?

I can see our one survivor, sitting lonely by
himself,—
All his college text-books round him,
ranged in order on their shelf;
There are classic "interliners" filled with
learning's choicest pith,
Each *cum notis variorum, quas recensuit
doctus* Smith;

Physics, metaphysics, logic, mathematics—
all the lot
Every wisdom-crammed octavo he has mas-
tered and forgot,

With the ghosts of dead professors standing guard beside them all;
And the room is full of shadows which their lettered backs recall.

How the past spreads out in vision with its far receding train,
Like a long embroidered arras in the chambers of the brain,
From opening manhood's morning when first we learned to grieve
To the fond regretful moments of our sorrow-saddened eve!

What early shadows darkened our idle summer's joy
When death snatched roughly from us that lovely bright-eyed boy!
The years move swiftly onwards; the deadly shafts fall fast,—
Till all have dropped around him—lo, there he stands,—the last!

Their faces flit before him, some rosy-hued and fair,
Some strong in iron manhood, some worn with toil and care;

Their smiles no more shall greet him on
cheeks with pleasure flushed!
The friendly hands are folded, the pleasant
voices hushed!

. . . . . .

My picture sets me dreaming; alas! and
can it be
Those two familiar faces we never more may
see?
In every entering footfall I think them
drawing near,
With every door that opens I say, "At
last they 're here!"

The willow bends unbroken when angry
tempests blow,
The stately oak is levelled and all its
strength laid low;
So fell that tower of manhood, undaunted
patient, strong,
White with the gathering snowflakes, who
faced the storm so long.

And he,—what subtle phrases their vary-
ing light must blend
To paint as each remembers our many
featured friend!

His wit a flash auroral that laughed in every
look,
His talk a sunbeam broken on the ripples
of a brook,

Or, fed from thousand sources, a fountain's
glittering jet,
Or careless handfuls scattered of diamond
sparks unset;
Ah, sketch him, paint him, mould him in
every shape you will,
He was *himself*—the only—the one unpic-
tured still!

Farewell! our skies are darkened and yet
the stars will shine,
We 'll close our ranks together and still fall
into line
Till one is left, one only, to mourn for all
the rest;
And Heaven bequeath their memories to
him who loves us best!

THE ARCHBISHOP AND GIL BLAS.

A MODERNIZED VERSION.

1879.

I DON'T think I feel much older; I 'm
aware I 'm rather gray,
But so are many young folks; I meet 'em
every day.

I confess I 'm more particular in what I eat and drink,
But one's taste improves with culture; that is all it means, I think.

Can you read as once you used to? Well, the printing is so bad,
No young folks' eyes can read it like the books that once we had.
Are you quite as quick of hearing? Please to say that once again.
Don't I use plain words, your Reverence? Yes, I often use a cane,

But it 's not because I need it,—no, I always liked a stick;
And as one might lean upon it, 'tis as well it should be thick.
Oh, I 'm smart, I 'm spry, I 'm lively,—I can walk, yes, that I can,
On the days I feel like walking, just as well as you, young man!

Don't you get a little sleepy after dinner every day?
Well, I doze a little, sometimes, but that always was my way.

Don't you cry a little easier than some twenty years ago?
Well, my heart is very tender, but I think 'twas always so.

Don't you find it sometimes happens that you can't recall a name?
Yes, I know such lots of people,—but my memory 's not to blame.
What! You think my memory 's failing! Why, it 's just as bright and clear,—
I remember my great-grandma! She 's been dead these sixty year!

Is your voice a little trembly? Well, it may be, now and then,
But I write as well as ever with a good old-fashioned pen;
It 's the Gillotts make the trouble,—not at all my finger-ends,—
That is why my hand looks shaky when I sign for dividends.

Don't you stoop a little, walking? It 's a way I 've always had,
I have always been round-shouldered, ever since I was a lad.

Don't you hate to tie your shoe-strings? Yes,
I own it—that is true.
Don't you tell old stories over? I am not
aware I do.

Don't you stay at home of evenings? Don't
you love a cushioned seat
In a corner, by the fireside, with your
slippers on your feet?
Don't you wear warm fleecy flannels? Don't
you muffle up your throat?
Don't you like to have one help you when
you're putting on your coat?

Don't you like old books you've dogs-eared,
you can't remember when?
Don't you call it late at nine o'clock and go
to bed at ten?
How many cronies can you count of all you
used to know
Who called you by your Christian name some
fifty years ago?

How look the prizes to you that used to fire
your brain?
You've reared your mound—how high is it
above the level plain?

You've drained the brimming golden cup
that made your fancy reel,
You've slept the giddy potion off,—now tell
us how you feel!

You've watched the harvest ripening till every
stem was cropped,
You've seen the rose of beauty fade till every
petal dropped,
You've told your thought, you've done your
task, you've tracked your dial round,
—I backing down! Thank Heaven, not yet!
I'm hale and brisk and sound,

And good for many a tussle, as you shall live
to see;
My shoes are not quite ready yet,—don't
think you're rid of me!
Old Parr was in his lusty prime when he
was older far,
And where will you be if I live to beat old
Thomas Parr?

Ah well,—I know,—at every age life has a
certain charm,—
You're going? Come, permit me, please, I
beg you'll take my arm.

I take your arm! Why take your arm?
I'd thank you to be told
I'm old enough to walk alone, but not so
very old!

THE SHADOWS.

1880.

"HOW many have gone?" was the question of old
Ere Time our bright ring of its jewels bereft;
Alas! for too often the death-bell has tolled,
And the question we ask is, "How many are left?"

Bright sparkled the wine; there were *fifty* that quaffed;
For a decade had slipped and had taken but three.
How they frolicked and sung, how they shouted and laughed,
Like a school full of boys from their benches set free!

There were speeches and toasts, there were stories and rhymes,
The hall shook its sides with their merriment's noise;

As they talked and lived over the college-day times,—
No wonder they kept their old name of "The Boys"!

The seasons moved on in their rhythmical flow
With mornings like maidens that pouted or smiled,
With the bud and the leaf and the fruit and the snow,
And the year-books of Time in his alcoves were piled.

There were *forty* that gathered where fifty had met;
Some locks had got silvered, some lives had grown sere,
But the laugh of the laughers was lusty as yet,
And the song of the singers rose ringing and clear.

Still flitted the years; there were *thirty* that came;
"The Boys" they were still, and they answered their call;

There were foreheads of care, but the smiles were the same,
And the chorus rang loud through the garlanded hall.

The hour-hand moved on, and they gathered again;
There were *twenty* that joined in the hymn that was sung;
But ah! for our song-bird we listened in vain,—
The crystalline tones like a seraph's that rung!

How narrow the circle that holds us to-night!
How many the loved ones that greet us no more,
As we meet like the stragglers that come from the fight,
Like the mariners flung from a wreck on the shore!

We look through the twilight for those we have lost;
The stream rolls between us, and yet they seem near;

Already outnumbered by those who have crossed,
Our band is transplanted, its home is not here!

They smile on us still—is it only a dream?—
While fondly or proudly their names we recall;
They beckon—they come—they are crossing the stream—
Lo! the Shadows! the Shadows! room—room for them all!

BENJAMIN PEIRCE,

ASTRONOMER, MATHEMATICIAN. 1809-1890.

1881.

FOR him the Architect of all
Unroofed our planet's starlit hall;
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.

With us on earth he walked by day,
His midnight path how far away!
We knew him not so well who knew
The patient eyes his soul looked through;

For who his untrod realm could share
Of us that breathe this mortal air,
Or camp in that celestial tent
Whose fringes gild our firmament?

How vast the workroom where he brought
The viewless implements of thought!
The wit how subtle, how profound,
That Nature's tangled webs unwound;

That through the clouded matrix saw
The crystal planes of shaping law,
Through these the sovereign skill that
planned,—
The Father's care, the Master's hand!

To him the wandering stars revealed
The secrets in their cradle sealed:
The far-off, frozen sphere that swings
Through ether, zoned with lucid rings;

The orb that rolls in dim eclipse
Wide wheeling round its long ellipse,—
His name Urania writes with these
And stamps it on her Pleiades.

We knew him not? Ah, well we knew
The manly soul, so brave, so true,
The cheerful heart that conquered age,
The childlike silver-bearded sage.

No more his tireless thought explores
The azure sea with golden shores;
Rest, wearied frame! the stars shall keep
A loving watch where thou shalt sleep.

Farewell! the spirit needs must rise,
So long a tenant of the skies,—
Rise to that home all worlds above
Whose sun is God, whose light is love.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

1882.

NOT bed-time yet! The night-winds blow,
The stars are out,—full well we know
The nurse is on the stair,
With hand of ice and cheek of snow,
And frozen lips that whisper low,
"Come, children, it is time to go
My peaceful couch to share."

No years a wakeful heart can tire;
Not bed-time yet! Come, stir the fire
And warm your dear old hands;
Kind Mother Earth we love so well
Has pleasant stories yet to tell
Before we hear the curfew bell;
Still glow the burning brands.

Not bed-time yet! We long to know
What wonders time has yet to show,
  What unborn years shall bring;
What ship the Arctic pole shall reach,
What lessons Science waits to teach,
What sermons there are left to preach,
  What poems yet to sing.

What next? we ask; and is it true
The sunshine falls on nothing new,
  As Israel's king declared?
Was ocean ploughed with harnessed fire?
Were nations coupled with a wire?
Did Tarshish telegraph to Tyre?
  How Hiram would have stared!

And what if Sheba's curious queen,
Who came to see,—and to be seen,—
  Or something new to seek,
And swooned, as ladies sometimes do,
At sights that thrilled her through and
    through,
Had heard, as she was "coming to,"
  A locomotive's shriek,

And seen a rushing railway train
As she looked out along the plain
  From David's lofty tower,—

A mile of smoke that blots the sky
And blinds the eagles as they fly
Behind the cars that thunder by
  A score of leagues an hour!

See to my *fiat lux* respond
This little slumbering fire-tipped wand,—
  One touch, it bursts in flame!
Steal me a portrait from the sun,—
One look,—and lo! the picture done!
Are these old tricks, King Solomon,
  We lying moderns claim?

Could you have spectroscoped a star?
If both these mothers at your bar,
  The cruel and the mild,
The young and tender, old and tough,
Had said, "Divide,—you 're right, though rough,"—
Did old Judea know enough
  To etherize the child?

These births of time our eyes have seen,
With but a few brief years between;
  What wonder if the text,
For other ages doubtless true,
For coming years will never do,—
Whereof we all should like a few,
  If but to see what next.

If such things have been, such may be;
Who would not like to live and see—
  If Heaven may so ordain—
What waifs undreamed of, yet in store,
The waves that roll for evermore
On life's long beach may cast ashore
  From out the mist-clad main?

Will Earth to pagan dreams return
To find from misery's painted urn
  That all save hope has flown,—
Of Book and Church and Priest bereft,
The Rock of Ages vainly cleft,
Life's compass gone, its anchor left,
  Left,—lost,—in depths unknown?

Shall Faith the trodden path pursue
The *crux ansata* wearers knew
  Who sleep with folded hands,
Where, like a naked, lidless eye,
The staring Nile rolls wandering by
Those mountain slopes that climb the sky
  Above the drifting sands?

Or shall a nobler Faith return,
Its fanes a purer gospel learn,
  With holier anthems ring,

And teach us that our transient creeds
Were but the perishable seeds
Of harvests sown for larger needs,
That ripening years shall bring?

Well, let the present do its best,
We trust our Maker for the rest,
As on our way we plod;
Our souls, full dressed in fleshly suits,
Love air and sunshine, flowers and fruits,
The daisies better than their roots
Beneath the grassy sod.

Not bed-time yet! The full-blown flower
Of all the year—this evening hour—
With friendship's flame is bright;
Life still is sweet, the heavens are fair,
Though fields are brown and woods are bare,
And many a joy is left to share
Before we say Good-night!

And when, our cheerful evening past,
The nurse, long waiting, comes at last,
Ere on her lap we lie
In wearied nature's sweet repose,
At peace with all her waking foes,
Our lips shall murmur, ere they close,
Good-night! and not Good-by!

A LOVING-CUP SONG.

1883.

COME, heap the fagots! Ere we go
Again the cheerful hearth shall glow;
We 'll have another blaze, my boys!
When clouds are black and snows are white,
Then Christmas logs lend ruddy light
They stole from summer days, my boys,
They stole from summer days.

And let the Loving-Cup go round,
The Cup with blessed memories crowned,
That flows whene'er we meet, my boys;
No draught will hold a drop of sin
If love is only well stirred in
To keep it sound and sweet, my boys,
To keep it sound and sweet.

Give me, to pin upon my breast,
The blossoms twain I love the best,
A rosebud and a pink, my boys;
Their leaves shall nestle next my heart,
Their perfumed breath shall own its part
In every health we drink, my boys,
In every health we drink.

The breathing blossoms stir my blood,
Methinks I see the lilacs bud
  And hear the bluebirds sing, my boys;
Why not? Yon lusty oak has seen
Full tenscore years, yet leaflets green
  Peep out with every spring, my boys,
    Peep out with every spring.

Old Time his rusty scythe may whet,
The unmowed grass is glowing yet
  Beneath the sheltering snow, my boys;
And if the crazy dotard ask,
Is love worn out? Is life a task?
  We 'll bravely answer No! my boys,
    We 'll bravely answer No!

For life's bright taper is the same
Love tipped of old with rosy flame
  That heaven's own altar lent, my boys,
To glow in every cup we fill
Till lips are mute and hearts are still,
  Till life and love are spent, my boys,
    Till life and love are spent.

THE GIRDLE OF FRIENDSHIP.

1884.

SHE gathered at her slender waist
The beauteous robe she wore ;
Its folds a golden belt embraced,
One rose-hued gem it bore.

The girdle shrank ; its lessening round
Still kept the shining gem,
But now her flowing locks it bound,
A lustrous diadem.

And narrower still the circlet grew ;
Behold ! a glittering band,
Its roseate diamond set anew,
Her neck's white column spanned.

Suns rise and set ; the straining clasp
The shortened links resist,
Yet flashes in a bracelet's grasp
The diamond, on her wrist.

At length, the round of changes past
The thieving years could bring,
The jewel, glittering to the last,
Still sparkles in a ring.

So, link by link, our friendships part,
So loosen, break, and fall,
A narrowing zone ; the loving heart
Lives changeless through them all.

THE LYRE OF ANACREON.

1885.

THE minstrel of the classic lay
Of love and wine who sings
Still found the fingers run astray
That touched the rebel strings.

Of Cadmus he would fain have sung,
Of Atreus and his line;
But all the jocund echoes rung
With songs of love and wine.

Ah, brothers! I would fain have caught
Some fresher fancy's gleam;
My truant accents find, unsought,
The old familiar theme.

Love, Love! but not the sportive child
With shaft and twanging bow,
Whose random arrows drove us wild
Some threescore years ago;

Not Eros, with his joyous laugh,
The urchin blind and bare,
But Love, with spectacles and staff,
And scanty, silvered hair.

Our heads with frosted locks are white,
  Our roofs are thatched with snow,
But red, in chilling winter's spite,
  Our hearts and hearthstones glow.

Our old acquaintance, Time, drops in,
  And while the running sands
Their golden thread unheeded spin,
  He warms his frozen hands.

Stay, wingèd hours, too swift, too sweet,
  And waft this message o'er
To all we miss, from all we meet
  On life's fast-crumbling shore :

Say that, to old affection true,
  We hug the narrowing chain
That binds our hearts,—alas, how few
  The links that yet remain !

The fatal touch awaits them all
  That turns the rocks to dust ;
From year to year they break and fall,—
  They break, but never rust.

Say if one note of happier strain
  This worn-out harp afford,—
One throb that trembles, not in vain,—
  Their memory lent its chord.

Say that when Fancy closed her wings
And Passion quenched his fire,
Love, Love, still echoed from the strings
As from Anacreon's lyre!

THE OLD TUNE.

THIRTY-SIXTH VARIATION.

1886.

THIS shred of song you bid me bring
Is snatched from fancy's embers;
Ah, when the lips forget to sing,
The faithful heart remembers!

Too swift the wings of envious Time
To wait for dallying phrases,
Or woven strands of laboured rhyme
To thread their cunning mazes.

A word, a sigh, and lo, how plain
Its magic breath discloses
Our life's long vista through a lane
Of threescore summers' roses!

One language years alone can teach:
Its roots are young affections
That feel their way to simplest speech
Through silent recollections.

That tongue is ours. How few the words
We need to know a brother!
As simple are the notes of birds,
Yet well they know each other.

This freezing month of ice and snow
That brings our lives together
Lends to our year a living glow
That warms its wintry weather.

So let us meet as eve draws nigh,
And life matures and mellows,
Till Nature whispers with a sigh,
"Good-night, my dear old fellows!"

THE BROKEN CIRCLE.

1887.

I STOOD on Sarum's treeless plain,
The waste that careless Nature owns;
Lone tenants of her bleak domain,
Loomed huge and gray the Druid stones.

Upheaved in many a billowy mound
The sea-like, naked turf arose,
Where wandering flocks went nibbling round
The mingled graves of friends and foes.

The Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane,
  This windy desert roamed in turn ;
Unmoved these mighty blocks remain
  Whose story none that lives may learn.

Erect, half buried, slant or prone,
  These awful listeners, blind and dumb,
Hear the strange tongues of tribes unknown,
  As wave on wave they go and come.

"Who are you, giants, whence and why?"
  I stand and ask in blank amaze ;
My soul accepts their mute reply :
  "A mystery, as are you that gaze.

"A silent Orpheus wrought the charm
  From riven rocks their spoils to bring ;
A nameless Titan lent his arm
  To range us in our magic ring.

"But Time with still and stealthy stride,
  That climbs and treads and levels all,
That bids the loosening keystone slide,
  And topples down the crumbling wall,—

"Time, that unbuilds the quarried past,
  Leans on these wrecks that press the sod ;
They slant, they stoop, they fall at last,
  And strew the turf their priests have trod.

"No more our altar's wreath of smoke
Floats up with morning's fragrant dew;
The fires are dead, the ring is broke,
Where stood the many stand the few."

My thoughts had wandered far away,
Borne off on Memory's outspread wing,
To where in deepening twilight lay
The wrecks of friendship's broken ring.

Ah me! of all our goodly train
How few will find our banquet hall!
Yet why with coward lips complain
That this must lean, and that must fall?

Cold is the Druid's altar-stone,
Its vanished flame no more returns;
But ours no chilling damp has known,—
Unchanged, unchanging, still it burns.

So let our broken circle stand
A wreck, a remnant, yet the same,
While one last, loving, faithful hand
Still lives to feed its altar-flame!

THE ANGEL-THIEF.

1888.

TIME is a thief who leaves his tools behind him;
He comes by night, he vanishes at dawn;
We track his footsteps, but we never find him:
Strong locks are broken, massive bolts are drawn,

And all around are left the bars and borers,
The splitting wedges and the prying keys,
Such aids as serve the soft-shod vault-explorers
To crack, wrench open, rifle as they please.

Ah, these are tools, which Heaven in mercy lends us!
When gathering rust has clenched our shackles fast,
Time is the angel-thief that Nature sends us
To break the cramping fetters of our past.

Mourn as we may for treasures he has taken,
  Poor as we feel of hoarded wealth bereft,
More precious are those implements forsaken,
  Found in the wreck his ruthless hands have left.

Some lever that a casket's hinge has broken
  Pries off a bolt, and lo! our souls are free;
Each year some Open Sesame is spoken,
  And every decade drops its master-key.

So as from year to year we count our treasure,
  Our loss seems less, and larger look our gains;
Time's wrongs repaid in more than even measure,—
  We lose our jewels, but we break our chains.

AFTER THE CURFEW.

1889.

THE Play is over. While the light
  Yet lingers in the darkening hall,
I come to say a last Good-night
  Before the final *Exeunt all.*

We gathered once, a joyous throng:
The jovial toasts went gaily round ;
With jest, and laugh, and shout, and song,
We made the floors and walls resound.

We come with feeble steps and slow,
A little band of four or five,
Left from the wrecks of long ago,
Still pleased to find ourselves alive.

Alive ! How living, too, are they
Whose memories it is ours to share !
Spread the long table's full array,—
There sits a ghost in every chair !

One breathing form no more, alas !
Amid our slender group we see ;
With him we still remained "The Class,"—
Without his presence what are we ?

The hand we ever loved to clasp,—
That tireless hand which knew no rest,—
Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,
Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

The beaming eye, the cheering voice,
That lent to life a generous glow,
Whose every meaning said "Rejoice,"
We see, we hear, no more below.

The air seems darkened by his loss,
  Earth's shadowed features look less fair,
And heavier weighs the daily cross
  His willing shoulders helped us bear.

Why mourn that we, the favoured few
  Whom grasping Time so long has spared
Life's sweet illusions to pursue,
  The common lot of age have shared?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart
  There breeds unfelt a throb of pain,—
One hour must rend its links apart,
  Though years on years have forged the chain.

So ends "The Boys,"—a lifelong play.
  We too must hear the Prompter's call
To fairer scenes and brighter day:
  Farewell! I let the curtain fall.

NOTES.

Page 138. INTERNATIONAL ODE.

This ode was sung in unison by twelve hundred children of the public schools, to the air of "God save the Queen," at the visit of the Prince of Wales to Boston, October 18th, 1860.

Pages 164 and 165. THE BOYS.

The members of the Harvard College class of 1829 referred to in this poem are: "Doctor," Francis Thomas; "Judge," G. T. Bigelow, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; "Speaker," Hon. Francis B. Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; "Mr. Mayor," G. W. Richardson, of Worcester, Mass.; "Member of Congress," Hon. George T. Davis; "Reverend," James Freeman Clarke; "boy with the grave mathematical look," Benjamin Peirce; "boy with a three-decker brain," Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, of the Supreme Court of the United States; "nice youngster of excellent pith," S. F. Smith, author of "My Country, 'tis of Thee."

Page 246. *That lovely, bright-eyed boy.*

William Sturgis.

Page 247. *Who faced the storm so long.*

Francis B. Crowninshield.

Page 247. *Our many-featured friend.*

George T. Davis.

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